

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 13th January, 2016

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairperson);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Spence);
Aldermen Kingston and Stalford; and
Councillors Attwood, Beattie, Craig,
Dudgeon, Graham, Kyle, Lyons,
Magee, McAteer, McDonough-Brown,
Ó Donnghaile, O'Hara and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mr. D. Durkan, Interim Director of Development;
Mrs. L. Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and
International Development and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Alderman McGimpsey.

Minutes

The minutes of the special meeting of 3rd and the meeting of 9th 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.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Request to present to Committee - Libraries NI

The Committee acceded to a request from Libraries NI to present to a future meeting.

Presentations

Ulster University Economic Policy Centre

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Professor Neil Gibson, Director of the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC), was in attendance and he was admitted to the meeting.

Professor Gibson explained to the Committee that the UUEPC was a self-financing, independent economic research centre, which focused on producing

evidence based research to inform policy development and implementation. He highlighted to the Committee that the Centre had been heavily involved in the research around Small Business Rate Relief and Air Passenger Duty (APD) for Northern Ireland. He reminded the Committee that, as one of its sponsors over the next two years, the Centre was available as a critical friend to provide assistance and research to the Council, particularly in relation to the Belfast Agenda and the challenge of economic regeneration within the City.

He provided the Members with an overview of the economic challenges that existed currently for Belfast, both in a wider and a local context as Northern Ireland's capital city. He highlighted that the public sector remained the largest employer in Northern Ireland, that increased numbers of people were in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and, while the percentage of those in employment had increased, that this was not a long-term trend and that there was a need to continue to exercise caution.

In response to a question on apprenticeships and the education system, Professor Gibson highlighted that it was important that our schools enforced the message that all jobs mattered in order to create a successful and stable local economy. He also suggested that there should be an aim to erase the hierarchy between 'further' and 'higher' education and that employers had a key role to play in this regard. In response to a further Member's question, he also advised that if a business was to leave the city, for example, it would be crucial to find out the reasons behind that decision.

After discussion, the Chief Executive and the Interim Director of Development advised the Members that working with the Centre would be extremely useful over the next few years, particularly in enhancing the Council's ongoing analysis of the city economy and supporting the underpinning evidence base for the Belfast Agenda.

The Chairperson thanked Professor Gibson for his presentation and he retired from the meeting.

The Committee agreed to receive future updates in relation to the work of the Centre and that copies of Professor Gibson's presentation would be circulated to the Members.

The MAC

The Committee was advised that Anne McReynolds, Chief Executive, Joe O'Neill, Chairman, and Ciaran McQuillan, Learning and Participation Officer, from the MAC were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting.

Ms. McReynolds stated that the MAC had opened in April 2012 following an £18m capital development in the Cathedral Quarter and that it had received support from both the public and the private sector, including Belfast City Council. She highlighted to the Committee that over 1.1million people had visited the MAC since it had opened, exceeding its target by over 66%, and that it had received 17 awards for

the building, its business and its work. She pointed out that the location of the MAC had been crucial in the vast regeneration of the now vibrant Cathedral Quarter. She confirmed that the galleries in the building were opened until 7.00pm daily and that they had large numbers of young people using 'the den' to do homework since it had installed free public wi-fi.

The Committee was advised that the MAC was a core multi-annual funded client of Belfast City Council's Tourism, Culture and Arts unit and that three years of funding had commenced in April 2013, which was due to end on 31st March, 2016. The MAC received £75,000 a year through this programme. The Committee was advised that the MAC had since submitted an application for the new Core Multi-annual Funding Programme operating between 1st April, 2016 and 31st March, 2020 and that they had requested £250,000 a year for 4 years. The Chief Executive of the MAC advised the Members that the requested uplift in funding was due to a significant shortfall in the funding needed to run the venue in an effective way.

During discussion, a Member asked who would be liable to pay for the replacement of the external cladding which had recently been highlighted in the media, to which the Chair of the MAC advised that a construction lawyer had been engaged and that this was currently being determined. In response to a number of further questions from the Members, the Chief Executive of the MAC advised that they appreciated that the Council suffered from significant demand for funding from a number of organisations and expressed that any assistance from the Council towards securing funding from other sources would be appreciated.

After discussion, during which it was pointed out that the Core Multi-Annual Funding (CMAF) would be discussed later in the meeting, the Committee agreed that the appropriate officers from the Council should engage with the MAC to investigate ways in which it could assist the organisation in attracting funding from other sources.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives from the MAC for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

Regeneration

MIPIIM Update

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that, on 18th September, 2015, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed that the Council should lead a city partnership delegation to MIPIIM which would take place in France from 14th - 17th March, 2016. A budget of £60,000 had been approved on the understanding that there would be equivalent match funding from the private sector. The Chief Executive advised the Committee that contributions of £85,500 had now been secured, which exceeded the minimum match funding target which had been agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and that further contributions were expected.

She outlined that MIPIIM attracted 20,000 delegates, including 4,500 investors and 1,500 developers, and that the purpose of the Belfast delegation would be to attract investors in the real estate sector and significant institutional investment funds. She explained that the delegation would achieve this by positioning the City alongside

international counterparts as well as presenting investment and development opportunities in a compelling and deliverable manner.

The Committee was advised that a successful event to promote Belfast at MIPIM had been held in Victoria Square on 27th November, 2015, and that 11 external partners had now agreed to join the City delegation, and that they hoped to announce further partners prior to March 2016. The 11 partners included A&L Goodbody, Belfast Harbour, Bywater Properties, Deloitte, Invest NI, Kilmona Holdings, Lacuna Developments, 16 South, Stelify Media, Titanic Quarter, and Tughans, and the Members were advised that both Queen's and the Ulster University were also involved.

She also advised that the event programme was being finalised and would be presented to the Committee in February, but that key aspects of the programme would include:

- three themed days covering creative industries, waterfront cities, and financial technology and professional services;
- showcasing investment opportunities, including strategic projects such as the NE Quarter, Transport Hub, Titanic Quarter, City Quays, Linen Quarter and the Cultural Hub. It would focus on the intention to reduce corporation tax from 20% to 12.5% in 2018; and
- events with other European partner cities including a specific Waterfront Cities event.

The Committee noted the progress made to date.

Cultural Hub

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 Members will recall that they were updated in August 2015 that the potential for the development of a major city centre cultural and visitor attraction has been highlighted in a number of recent internal strategies including the City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan and the Integrated Tourism Strategy for Belfast 2015-2020 and that in addition a range of other cultural infrastructure proposals were under development by a number of organisations including the Arts Council, Royal Ulster Academy, the National Museums Northern Ireland and the BBC's digital archive. Given this Members agreed that Council officers should continue to engage with key stakeholders regarding the potential for collaboration and how the proposals under development could be best aligned towards developing one further major attraction for the city.**

1.2 In addition, the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy suggests that an Innovation/Creative District or area should be created around the new University of Ulster Campus and that the planned new premises for the BBC might help anchor such a creative/innovation district in that part of the city. Recent and proposed trading of land and property in this area also has the potential to facilitate a much more substantial proposal to link the Cultural Hub with an Innovation/Creative District. The potential for such a significant regeneration scheme also presents substantial opportunities for social entrepreneurship, employability schemes, outreach to communities, etc.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Members on the ongoing engagement with stakeholders regarding the development of a major attraction in the city centre
- Agree that a business case is undertaken in relation to the next steps in the development of a Cultural Hub (linked to the Innovation/Creative district proposal) to test its feasibility, affordability, deliverability and sustainability

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report and –

- note that ongoing discussions with partners have highlighted that there is an in-principle agreement to explore complementary proposals for the development of a major city centre cultural and visitor attraction
- in light of this, agree that a business case is undertaken into the next steps in relation to the development of a Cultural Hub linked to an Innovation / creative district which will test its affordability, deliverability, feasibility and sustainability. The study will be funded from the City Centre Regeneration budget and will be taken forward by officers from the City Centre Team, the Development Department and the Property & Projects Department. A number of partner organisations have indicated that they are willing to support the costs of the development of the business case and officers will continue discussions to secure match funding
- note that the Cultural Hub will require a significant capital investment. Council officers are therefore also exploring other potential avenues for funding for the

proposed project including private investment, EU funding, philanthropic contribution and public sector support. The Cultural Hub has also been proposed as a potential project for funding under Peace IV. Officers are currently assessing this proposal, together with the other emerging proposals, to test their alignment with the Peace IV objectives. Members are asked to note that an update on the Peace IV projects is being taken to the SP&R Committee on 22nd January

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1** Members will be aware that there have been references to a major city centre museum or gallery attraction in a number of recent Council strategies. The City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan highlights that: *'...serious thought should be given to the opportunity to create a second star attraction, preferably by making use of a piece of Belfast's built heritage. One promising opportunity that should be explored is a contemporary visual art museum with both local and global programming. Modern art has proved a strong draw in other cities – local content could give it a special edge.'* Similarly the Integrated Tourism Strategy for Belfast 2015-2020 identifies the theme of Contemporary Art and Design and points to the need for a city centre-based attraction of international quality. Subsequent to this, there have also been informal conversations about a more unique attraction telling the Belfast Story through a wide range of media, including art, digital media, news archives and music and that the hub could potentially consist of a number of different venues and buildings.
- 3.2** It should be noted that in parallel to BCC's thinking, a number of organisations and partnerships have been working on proposals to develop a range of visual arts and other cultural infrastructure proposals including:
- Visual Arts Hub proposal
 - Regional Art Gallery proposal
 - Future developments in film exhibition and cinema
 - Development proposals at National Museums Northern Ireland including the Ulster Museum site
 - The extension of the Central Library
- 3.3** At a meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2015 it was agreed that officers should continue to engage with key stakeholders involved with these various

proposals and provide further updates to Council as required. In particular work to date has focused on how these proposals could align with a number of wider strategic objectives to support city centre regeneration, cultural development and tourism growth in the city.

- 3.4 A number of meetings have now taken place with a range of stakeholders including:
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland
 - Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
 - National Museums Northern Ireland
 - Northern Ireland Screen
 - Tourism NI
 - BBC Northern Ireland
- 3.5 These stakeholders have agreed in principle to examine the potential to bring together a number of complementary propositions, and make the case to further develop the concept of a cultural hub as a major transformational project that plays to the aspirations of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan. A main element of the cultural hub would be to tell a number of distinctly Belfast stories through archives, artefacts and art.
- 3.6 Further work is now required to examine the potential for a new city centre destination that would help to further establish Belfast as a creative city whilst stimulating cultural output that includes significant civic engagement and social impact as well as creating a visitor attraction with tourism spend and economic impact. It is therefore proposed that a business case for the proposal be worked up. This will test the feasibility, affordability, sustainability and deliverability of the proposal. It is proposed that this is taken forward by officers from the City Centre Team, the Development Department and the Property and Projects Department to ensure alignment with strategic initiatives internally and externally. The City & Growth Committee will be kept up to date in relation to the development of the business case and its findings as this progresses.
- 3.7 Members will recognise that the potential development of a Cultural Hub will require a significant capital investment. Council officers are therefore also exploring other potential avenues for funding for the proposed project including private investment, EU funding, philanthropic contribution and public sector support. The Hub has also been proposed as a potential project for funding under Peace IV. Officers are currently assessing this proposal, together with the other

emerging proposals, to test their alignment with the Peace IV objectives. Members are asked to note that an update on the Peace IV projects is being taken to the SP&R Committee on 22nd January. Other potential funding sources will also be examined as part of the business case.

3.8 Financial & Resource Implications

Financial – Up to £30,000 from the City Centre Regeneration budget towards the costs of the development of the business case. A number of partner organisations have already indicated that they will also be willing to support the costs of the development of the business case and Council officers will continue discussions to see if match funding can be secured or savings realised from previous studies.

Resources – Staff from the City Centre Regeneration Team, Development Department and the Property & Projects Department will take forward the development of the business case to ensure a co-ordinated approach. Officers will also work with partner organisations

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no Equality or Good Relations implications at this stage. Equality and Good Relations implications will be examined as the project develops.”

During discussion, a number of Members stated that the Council should be careful not to duplicate any current offering within the city and the Chief Executive confirmed that this would be taken into consideration.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Place Positioning

The Committee considered the undernoted report in conjunction with a summary of the updated City narrative and propositions:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To update elected members on progress on the place positioning process; to seek members’ approval to market test the draft city narrative and to proceed to implementation with city stakeholders.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to agree to testing further the refined city's narrative/proposition with key stakeholders and within key target markets and to officers working with stakeholders to agree a joint implementation plan from 2016/17 onwards.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

Members previously considered a paper entitled 'International Marketing Framework for Belfast' and approved the following for development;

- The development of a city narrative / proposition.
- A refresh of the city positioning ensuring it reflects the city's ambitions, its values and narrative, which is collectively owned by the city's stakeholders.
- Agreed target audiences, product development priorities and marketing initiatives to be outlined in an implementation plan.
- Suggested delivery structures.

3.2 It is crucial to note that this work is not about a brand or a strap line, but rather a unique city proposition that stakeholders and the council will use to support the ambition for the city, improve standards and behaviours, support growth in the local economy and increase civic pride. This work will impact on how the city works at various levels. For example, it will

- Provide a citywide strategic framework influencing the approaches of key partner organisations, including the education sector, investment agencies, the tourism and cultural sector, social enterprise, public agencies, our arms length companies and businesses.
- At a council level it will influence our decision making and shape how we approach communications and marketing, economic development, events, funding and our internal change programme. It will support the delivery of the Belfast Agenda and key elements of that including the Employability and Skills Strategy, the Integrated Tourism Strategy, Cultural Framework, Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, the Events Framework and the Waterfront transformation process.

- It will inform how the city is promoted and marketed to investors, students, tourists and businesses /employers. A coherent proposition will enable the demonstration of momentum under one city banner, for example through branding all development sites across the city, the type of events we host, how we launch new initiatives/ developments and how we report on growth in tourism, investment etc.

3.3 Clearly, this narrative/proposition is for the city as a whole and not for the council per se - it must therefore work for other stakeholders like Invest NI, the private sector, tourism, culture and arts, creative industries and education etc.

3.4 During 2015, extensive consultation was undertaken including:

- 50 one-to-one meetings with key City stakeholders.
- Four sectoral focus groups.
- Two workshops with over 100 selected people.

3.5 The work was overseen by a steering group representing higher and third level education, investment agencies, tourism and hospitality bodies, creative and arts sectors, media and transport including both airports. The general view expressed was the proposition needs to be authentic, unique (with some 'grit' or edginess and youthfulness) and must be ambitious, demonstrating that Belfast is forward looking and ready to be reborn.

3.6 At an elected member workshop on the 4th December 2015, two draft narratives were considered. Following members' feedback the proposition has been refined and will be presented at this meeting for further consideration.

3.7 The next steps in the process will require further engagement with city stakeholders and within key markets to test the concepts that have been developed further.

3.8 Implementation

The most important aspect of this proposition is how it is used and implemented to drive the agreed outcomes for the city. An implementation plan outlining how this will be rolled out from 2016/17 onwards will therefore be developed.

- 3.9 A significant part of this work will involve working with other city stakeholders to ensure the narrative is applied across all relevant city initiatives and projects in relation to:**
- Promoting and championing Belfast
 - Relationship management
 - Influencing stakeholders
 - Delivering city priorities
 - Reflecting the city's culture
- 3.10 Priorities for delivery in 2016/17**
Some priorities for ensuring the proposition is used and embedded in city activities during 2016/17 may include the following (which will need to be considered further with city stakeholders);
- Belfast on the Road events in target cities e.g. China in May
 - Corporate brand alignment
 - Property and Investment Events e.g. MIPIM
 - Sector tradeshow
 - Ambassador scheme and recruit ambassadors
 - Corporate communications and city marketing strategies (which may include funding applications, sponsorship and involvement of stakeholders)
 - Building and space design panel guidelines
 - Development of collateral, visual language, photography, the investors portal
- 3.11 The work will involve building relationships with key stakeholders and seeking to influence projects across the city including, for example:**
- Green space development
 - BBC relocation
 - UU relocation
 - Events strategy
 - Hotels and offices strategy
 - Signage schemes
 - Public realm
 - Consistent marketing messaging
 - Transport hub & Rapid Transit system
 - Investment messaging

3.12 Financial & Resource Implications

The financial implications for this activity are contained within the revenue estimates being presented to the SP&R Committee on Friday 22nd January 2016.

- 3.13** Currently key pieces of work are underway across the organisation including a cross council team working on an investment portal and specific teams taking forward various strands (such as the City Centre Development and Investment Strategy, MIPM, tourism, culture and arts, economic development, capital projects, events, planning, international relations and employability and skills etc) but effective coordination of this work across the organisation along with support to external partnerships will be key to facilitating effective city positioning. A co-ordination and support role will therefore need to be performed from the centre of the organisation.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no known equality issues at this time.”

The CX circulated a presentation of the key aspects of the narrative and the main marketing themes for investors, foreign students and tourists.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Rural Development Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the opportunities for Belfast through the EU funded Rural Development Programme, and seek approval for accessing the programme.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee:
- Notes the opportunities for Belfast within the new Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.
 - Agrees to allocate £10,000 towards the development of village plans for Hannahstown and Edenderry.
 - Notes the financial and staffing resources required to develop relevant elements of the programme.

- Agrees to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to enter into the SLA with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

3.0 Main report

3.1 A budget of £500m has been agreed with the Northern Ireland Executive for the Rural Development Fund 2014-2020.

3.2 Part of the funding is allocated through council-led LAGs (Local Action Groups). Belfast is part of a LAG along with the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area. Not all areas in Belfast are eligible under the Rural Development Programme. This is confined to the rural boundary (see Appendix One).

3.3 A funding allocation of £3.23m is available for all activity in this LAG area. This covers the following:

- Rural Business Investment Scheme
- Rural Broadband Scheme
- Rural Basic Services
- Village Renewal
- All-Island Cooperation Scheme.

3.4 In addition to the LAG – funded activities, councils can benefit from support under the Rural Tourism Scheme. This was the subject of a separate report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in December 2015 with a view to agreeing priority projects to be submitted for funding.

3.5 The LAG governance structure is made up of 51% social partners and 49% elected members. Councillor Stephen Magennis is the appointed Belfast City Council elected member representative. The group is responsible for developing the strategy under which the relevant funding is allocated. An interim strategy has now been drafted. DARD has advised that local strategies should be consistent with council community plans. They acknowledge that these will not be in place until 2016, and therefore they accept that the strategies may have to be revised at that point.

3.6 The LAG in which Belfast and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Councils operate is the only LAG that involves two council areas. All other LAGs are based on single council areas.

3.7 In order to raise awareness of opportunities for funding under this programme within the Belfast area, Officers held

two consultation sessions with potentially eligible businesses, community groups and individuals. These took place as follows:

- 24 November 2015, Malone House Belfast
- 02 December 2015, Sally Gardens Community Centre Belfast.

3.8 The LAG Board formally approved the Lagan Rural Partnership Strategy on 14 December 2015 along with the amended Articles of Association for the new LAG Board. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council will now enter into a Service Level Agreement with the LAG Board Members including BCC to service the NI Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

3.9 Activities relevant to Belfast City Council under the LAG include:

Rural Business Investment Scheme

There is a very limited number of businesses operating within the eligible rural boundary. It is proposed that the council's Economic Development team works with eligible businesses to signpost them to relevant support under this scheme.

Rural Broadband Scheme

Given that the area already benefits from access to high speed broadband, the LAG has decided not to invest resources in this area.

Rural Basic Services

This scheme provides up to £50,000 for 'innovative service delivery' capital or revenue investment which provides access to basic services or improvements in social infrastructure. This might include community facilities such as childcare, elderly care or community capacity building. Members should note that there is a 25% match funding requirement on this measure, with a minimum of 5% expected to come from councils. Officers will promote the scheme in the relevant areas. Any requests for match funding would be subject to further reports to relevant committees. No funding has been set aside at this point.

Village Renewal

There are two areas in the Belfast City Council area that can be considered as 'villages' in line with programme stipulations. These are Hannahstown and Edenderry.

- 3.10 In order to be eligible for any funding, areas must develop a 'village plan'. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is in the process of commissioning an organisation to develop these village plans. It is proposed that Belfast City Council agrees to make a contribution of up to £10,000 towards the development of these two plans. Once completed, a report will be brought back to Committee setting out proposed way forward, including any funding requirements. Villages can potentially avail of up to £150,000 and it is likely that up to 6 villages will be funded across the LAG area. Consideration will need to be given to the level of officer support that can be provided, commensurate with the potential return for the areas.

3.11 LEADER All Island Cooperation Scheme (£200k)

DARD has confirmed that one North/South cooperation project is required for the LAG (7% of LAG budget must be allocated). DARD is to open a first call for applications with a budget of £1m which will be a separate allocation over and above that allocated to the LAG. It was agreed at the LAG meeting on 9 November 2015 that the following will be included in the Interim Strategy:

- Waterways College Programme – an accredited conservation management course led by Lagan Canal Trust and targeted at young people, third age volunteers and long term unemployed that could be delivered from the Trust's premises at Navigation House.
- Motor cycling tourism – to develop north/south motor cycling tourism products linked to road racing events calendar – self catering B&B sites etc.
- Lough Neagh Tourism – develop Lough Neagh as a tourist destination by learning from other EU countries on how to develop waterways in a way to better impact positively on the wider rural community and economy.
- NI Year of Food and Drink 2016 – to develop north/south cooperation project involving all 10 LAGS.

3.12 Financial & Resource Implications

Members should note that there are staff resource implications with regards to opportunities for the Belfast rural area. Note the £10,000 development costs are available within the current year EU Unit budget.

- **Mentoring and business plan development support to businesses eligible for pursuing the business investment scheme funds.**
- **Development support for village renewal and basic services plans, at a maximum cost of £10,000, for both Edenderry and Hannahstown villages along with a potential request for match funding to be presented at a later date.**
- **Development, match funding and delivery support for the rural tourism scheme (activity to be led by City and Neighbourhood Services Department).**
- **Development and delivery support for any All Island cooperation projects, should there be any added value in Belfast City Council involvement.**

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no Equality or Good Relations implications attached to this report.”

In response to a Member’s question regarding whether a Balmoral Councillor could be appointed onto the Council-led Local Action Group (LAG), the Interim Director of Development advised that this was one of the positions on outside bodies which had been appointed via the d’Hondt process and that Councillor Magennis was the appointed elected member for Belfast City Council. However, the Director advised that he would ensure that Balmoral Councillors were informed of any outcomes from future meetings discussing the development of village plans for Edenderry.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Tourism, Events & International Relations

Boston - Friendship Four Update (FFU)

The Interim Director of Development reminded the Committee that the Friendship Four Festival had been held in Belfast on 27th and 28th November 2015 and that this had been the first major output from the Boston-Belfast Sister City Partnership. The Director stated that this had been the first time that competitive college ice hockey had been played outside of the United States and that Belfast City Council had been a key sponsor of the initiative, along with DCAL, DEL, Sport NI, Tourism Ireland, Tourism NI, CITI, the US State Department and the city of Boston.

He advised that, over the course of the festival, a civic dinner had been held on 25th November with 160 people in attendance, as well as an economic briefing for the Boston delegation on Belfast's key priorities, development plans and economic position.

In addition to the sporting events, the Members were advised that business representatives from Boston had had a number of meetings with Belfast contacts where a range of opportunities had been identified for future business-related activities between the Sister Cities. In order to progress those discussions, the Chairman of the Sister Cities Group in Boston had invited the Lord Mayor to Boston in February 2016. This visit would also coincide with a future visit to Boston by representatives from the Odyssey, who were planning a repeat of the Friendship Four event in November 2016. The Committee was advised that travel and accommodation costs were approximately £5,600, for 3 people for a 5 day programme, and would be met through the International Relations Budget.

The Committee agreed to the participation of the Lord Mayor and two officers to travel to Boston from 4th-9th February, 2016, to engage in a series of follow-up meetings to develop additional activities for the coming year.

Year of Food - Belfast Delivery Plan

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to request Members' approval for a 2016 Belfast Food and Drink Tourism Development Plan. The aim of the plan is to maximise Belfast's profile during the Northern Ireland Year of Food and Drink 2016 and generate maximum PR for the city. The plan will prioritise activities to achieve targets identified in the Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015 to 2020.

1.2 If successful in securing partner funding, the main elements of the plan will deliver the second Focus on Food Tourism Conference, a series of Twilight @ St George's Market events, a Tourism Northern Ireland Meet the Buyer support event and an extended version of Belfast Restaurant Week.

1.3 This Plan focuses on activity to be led by Belfast City Council. However, the activities have been developed in conjunction with a range of partner organisations. It will be important to maintain a partnership approach to the delivery of these activities.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to approve an allocation of £30,000 from the 2016-17 TCH&A budget to deliver upon the attached food

tourism development plan to support delivery of the range of priority activities set out in Appendix 1. This activity will be delivered with partners across the city as part of the Northern Ireland Year of Food and Drink 2016 programme. Sponsorship will also be sought.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

The Northern Ireland Year of Food and Drink 2016 is led by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in partnership with government departments including the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development. A total budget of £2.75m has been committed and this will be administered via Tourism Northern Ireland, Food Northern Ireland and Invest Northern Ireland. The PR targets set are ambitious and it is important that Belfast has a clear plan to maximise the opportunities for our city and attract the investment required to deliver our vision for tourism growth.

3.2 Belfast City Council has led the development of a series of food tourism experiences in partnership with the private sector and has successfully generated support and income from partners including DARD through the NIRFP. The programme has supported:

- The launch and establishment of the Belfast Bred Tour in 2010
- Great Belfast Food Week March 2010 and 2011
- Belfast Restaurant Week October 2012, 2013, 2014
- Taste and Dine October 2013, 2014
- Focus on Food Conference February 2015
- New Norths Brian Friel Food and Drink Mini Festival August 2015
- Twilight @ St George's November 2015

3.3 The programmes delivered have successfully raised the profile of the food and drink offer, generated positive and valuable PR and increased additional spend and visitor numbers as well as helping to animate the day and evening economy. In 2014 Belfast Restaurant Week generated over £1m in PR and attracted 36,000 people from the Greater Belfast area, spending £500,000. The recent Twilight @ St George's Market attracted 17,000 people from across Northern Ireland to the city generating over £600,000, with traders reporting record sales and restaurants throughout the city also reporting uplift in spend and footfall.

3.4 To ensure that the city continues to celebrate the food offering and maximises the opportunities arising out of the Year of Food and Drink 2016, Belfast City Council has developed a plan of activity in partnership with key industry contacts. The intended programme objectives are to:

- 1. Generate £1m PR for Belfast in the RoI and National press.**
- 2. Increase percentage of spend on eating out from 2014 baseline.**
- 3. Improve Visitor Access to and awareness of Belfast/Northern Ireland Food and Drink.**
- 4. Encourage more Belfast hospitality businesses to source local food and drink.**
- 5. Develop new food experiences and products that are 'distinctly Belfast'.**
- 6. Create experiences that strengthen place positioning work throughout a programme that is attractive to the urban high spend market.**
- 7. Support a programme that promotes social responsibility and giving through the hospitality sector.**

3.5 The objectives will be achieved through the activities and events identified in the plan. The summary of the key features of the plan include:

1. Second Focus on Food Conference 2016–23 February 2016

In 2015 Belfast City Council delivered the first Focus on Food Conference at St George's Market which attracted over 300 delegates from across Northern Ireland. The purpose of the event was to bring producers and chefs/restaurateurs together to network and learn from food tourism leaders. The event successfully secured partnerships with producers and retailers/restaurateurs and inspired more food tourism activity. The 2016 conference has already attracted financial support from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Tourism Northern Ireland and Food NI. With 2016 being designated as Year of Food and Drink, the second Focus on Food Conference will be focussed on what the legacy will be from our celebrations and set out growth objectives for the years ahead.

2. Seasonal Twilight @ St George's Market - Proposed

The successful pilot Twilight @ St George's has proved that there is a demand for such an event on a

more regular basis. The plan proposes to run the Twilight event on a seasonal basis to celebrate the best of our seasonal produce. The seasonal twilight will run over two nights up to three times per year on condition of successful funding and adequate resources. It will feature pop up restaurants, street food vendors and traders and include an animated programme of chef demonstrations, food talks, live music and entertainment.

3. **'Meet the Buyer' Workshop - April 2016**
Tourism Northern Ireland's annual 'Meet the Buyer' workshop will be held in Belfast in 2016. Belfast City Council proposes to use this opportunity to showcase the strong food and drink tourism products in operation in the city and offer potential buyers special food and drink packages. We will work with the delivery partners to ensure they have a presence at the event and can sell their products.
4. **Belfast Restaurant Fortnight – 11 to 23 October 2016**
Building on the success of Belfast Restaurant Week, we propose to run a Belfast Restaurant Fortnight which will be launched with a two night autumn harvest themed Twilight @ St George's Market on 11 October 2016. The targets will include signing up 60 restaurants to run 100 events throughout the fortnight. Events will include gourmet tastings, chef demonstrations, themed food and drink events, special brunches, suppers, dinners, food and drink workshops and talks. The week will also include the BBC Food and Drink show which will showcase local food and drink to the general public. The innovative events and activity will help to secure media visits and we will work with Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland to maximise the PR potential.
5. **Marketing and Communications**
The plan is to work with our key partners to maximise PR from all of the activity and events. There will be dedicated marketing plans to support all the events. We also propose bringing Belfast food and drink to potential tourism markets through the 'Belfast Takeaway Campaign' which include showcasing chefs, food and drink on the road. This will be in partnership with Visit Belfast. Further detail of the above initiatives is included in the plan (Appendix 1).

3.6 Financial & Resource Implications

Belfast City Council has identified £30,000 from the Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts (TCH&A) 2016-17 budget estimates to support the plan and this investment could potentially secure £100,000 from our key partners including the private sector/hospitality industry, Tourism NI and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development via their Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme (decisions expected in January 2016). A further estimated £200,000 'in kind' support will be generated through our partners via marketing and communications platforms, resources and investment into the various events taking place. Members should note that, £5,000 was also committed from the Tourism, Culture, Heritage & Arts 2015-16 budget, which leveraged £8,000 from DARD and £5,000 from Tourism NI. This is a total investment of £35,000 into the NI Year of Food & Drink campaign. Two funding applications for £10,000 and £46,500 are pending and private sector support is to be confirmed. Should resources not be provided the programme will have to be scaled back accordingly.

Resources

Officer time committed to manage the projects and administration of the funding.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or good relations implications attached to this report."

During discussion, a number of Members paid tribute to the staff who had been involved in the highly successful pilot of the 'Twilight Market at St. George's' which had taken place on 11th November, 2015. The Interim Director of Development confirmed that, based on the success of the pilot, three Twilight Markets had been planned on a seasonal basis and that they would take place over two nights instead of one. In response to a Member's question, the Director confirmed that supermarkets would also be included in the 'Meet the Buyer' events.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

EU Youth Parliament (EYP)

The Interim Director of Development provided the Committee with an update on the plans for this year's EU Youth Parliament. He reminded the Members that the EYP was a programme for and by young people, which brought together young people from all over Europe to discuss current topics in a parliamentary setting. Its mission was to inspire and empower young Europeans to become open-minded, tolerant and active

citizens and it was one of the largest European platforms for political debate, intercultural encounters, European civic education and the exchange of ideas among young people in Europe.

The Committee was advised that the programme would be split between Belfast and Dublin and would be the first EYP International Session to be hosted by 2 cities. While in Belfast, from 4th – 9th March, the International Session would gather 300 young people aged 16-25 years who were EYP members, under the theme of “Crossing Borders, Transcending Conflict”. The delegates would participate in team building activities, cultural exchanges, an international version of EurVoice and EYP committee debates. The cost of organising the Session would be £5,000 and the Members were advised that the funding would be taken from within the existing European Unit budget.

The Director also advised that the official opening of the event would take place in the City Hall on 7th March, 2016, and that the event’s Eurovillage, displaying the delegates’ culinary traditions, was likely to take place in St George’s Market. The Lord Mayor would speak at this event and an invitation would be extended to all Members of the Committee.

The Committee approved the allocation of financial assistance to the value of £5,000 from within the existing European Unit budget in relation to the International Session in the city in March 2016.

Operational Issues

Zoo Improvement Report

(Ms. J. Wilson, Business Manager in Parks, attended in connection with this item.)

The Business Manager reminded the Committee that, at its meeting in August 2015, it had received a report on the financial performance of the Zoo as well as an Action Plan for improvement. The Members were advised that the performance of the commercial assets of the department had been under scrutiny due to the financial pressures they were facing with reduced income and increasing charges for goods and services.

She advised that a key piece of work had been undertaken to benchmark the commercial services and to review their performance over the last number of years. The Committee was advised that the approach had included developing common design principles, for further discussion, which may include:

- sustainable job creation where possible;
- a review of working arrangements to reflect customer experience;
- achieving NITB visitor star grading;
- maintaining World-Host status;
- a 30% reduction in subsidy levels over the next 3 years;
- that the status quo could not continue;
- introduction of peripatetic/ flexible roles; and
- maximising revenue opportunities where possible

- these will be worked through further in the context of the corporate approach to change and improvement

The Committee was advised that a programme of capital investment to support the refurbishment of the enclosures and other historic assets at the site would be vital to the long term sustainability of the Zoo and that it was important that the regional significance of the Zoo was also captured within the project. A number of Members expressed concerns that the number of visitors was declining while the costs of running the Zoo were increasing.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the progress which had been made in the improvement programme and agreed to receive quarterly updates; and
2. requested that a further report be brought to a future meeting with an analysis of what other zoos were doing, by comparison, and looking at the broader issues.

Markets Issues - Promoting markets

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Members on proposals to provide additional marketing and advertising support to non-Council markets operating across the city
- Update Members on the success of the recent Twilight Market and to set out plans for future events of this type.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Agree a budget of £5,000 to promote and advertise non-Council markets across the City in the coming calendar year, with finances being set aside within the Markets Unit budget
- Note the success of the Twilight Market at St George’s on 11 November 2015 and note plans for similar future events in the coming year.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Promoting local markets

Members will recall that, at an earlier meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, it was agreed that consideration should be given to how the council could provide additional promotional support to non-Council markets that were operating across the city.

3.2 At present, there are a number of regular markets that are run by organisations other than the Council. These include:

- Folktown Market – takes places every Thursday in Bank Square (but now closed for the winter season)
- Fine and Dandy Market – takes place on last Sunday in every month in Crescent Arts Centre
- Ballyhackamore Market – takes place on second Saturday of every month in grounds of St Colmcille’s church on Upper Newtownards Road
- Conway Mill Market – takes place every Saturday in the mill
- Dock Market – takes place at Titanic Quarter every other Saturday
- Proposal for Cathedral Quarter/Dirty Onion – still to be developed

3.3 There are also a number of markets that operate on a one-off basis. All markets are in receipt of a relevant licence from the Council, which gives them permission to trade and sets out the parameters of their operation, as well as any fees due to the Council.

3.4 Members asked officers to draw up a plan to help promote these markets and to encourage the establishment of additional markets. Officers from the Markets Unit have worked with Corporate Communications to develop an advertising and promotional campaign. This plan will cover a 3-month period early in the New Year (in line with when markets are operational) and will include:

- Radio, Press and Online advertising
- Website update
- Regular Facebook and Twitter posts on Belfast City Council accounts in line with market timings.

3.5 The costs for the advertising activity have been negotiated down to around £5,000. The Council Facebook, Twitter and website updates will be undertaken by officers at no

additional financial cost, apart from staff time commitment. The campaign will be monitored and reviewed at the end of the period, with a view to measuring its effectiveness.

3.6 Twilight Market

Members will be aware that the first ever Twilight Market took place at St George's Market on 11 November 2015. The focus of the market was primarily on food, but there were also a number of non-food stalls such as crafts and other local produce. The market also incorporated a range of cookery demonstrations as well as live music performances from local artists.

3.7 Over 140 stalls took part in the event. Many of these were existing traders at St George's, but a number were new traders. The market ran from 5pm-11pm and over 17,000 people attended in the course of the evening.

3.8 The market received extensive promotional coverage. There were live broadcasts from BBC Newsline, Radio Ulster, City Beat, Q Radio and U105 and there were very positive stories – both in the run-up to and after the event – in the Belfast Telegraph and Irish News.

3.9 The event had a very significant social media profile and this was the main communications channel used to build interest in advance of the event. It reached 1.2 million users on Facebook and 188,000 people viewed the event on Facebook. In addition, the event reached 200,444 twitter accounts.

3.10 Feedback from the traders was extremely positive with most, if not all, exceeding their targets and many traders running out of stock towards the end of the evening. Feedback from customers also was mostly positive. There were some negative comments with regard to the need to queue for entry at some points in the course of the evening, as well as references to the large crowds at the event.

3.11 Due to the huge success of the market, it is proposed that three Twilight Markets will be organised for the coming year. These will each be two night events in order to ensure better crowd management and to give more people the opportunity to attend. Further details are set out within the Year of Food and Drink report that is also on this agenda.

Financial and Resource Implications

A budget of £5,000 to promote and advertise non-Council markets across the City in the coming calendar year from within the Markets Unit's Budget.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or good relations implications."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Consultation Response - Taxi Ranks at Donegall Square

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this item to the Special Meeting which was scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 3rd February, at which the Belfast Public Hire Taxi Service were invited to attend.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the following reports are restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

City Centre Update

The Chief Executive provided the Members with a progress report in relation to the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (CCRIS). The Committee was reminded that the CCRIS had been formally launched on 22nd September, 2015, and over the last four months the Council had been implementing the Strategy across five thematic areas, namely, flagship projects, medium term projects, development strategy, go to market and delivery.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Revenue Estimates 2016/17

The Committee considered a report, which had been prepared by the Director of Finance and Resources, in relation to the establishment of the District Rate and the compilation of the Estimates of Revenue Expenditure for the year 2016/2017.

The Director provided an overview of the additional financing requirement for the Council for 2016/17. He presented the cash limit for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for 2016/17, as recommended by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on the 18th December, 2015, and outlined the next steps in the rate setting process which would lead to the setting of the district rate by Council at its meeting in February, 2016.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:

1. a cash limit for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for 2016/17 of £15,886,293 and the individual service cash limits detailed in the report; and
2. noted that further party group briefings on the district rate and the efficiency programme would be held in January 2016, prior to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 22nd January 2016.

Core Multi-Annual Funding for Arts and Heritage Organisations

(Ms. E. Henry, Assistant Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development and the Assistant Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager outlined to the Committee the recommended amount of funding for various organisations under the Core Multi-Annual Funding Programme 2016-2020. The Members were reminded that this four year period had been set in line with the Cultural Framework which would finish in 2020.

The Head of Economic Initiatives explained that the purpose of the funding was to support core and associated programme costs, offering long term sustainability for Belfast-based arts or heritage organisations which had full time staff and ongoing annual costs, and which produced work which substantially benefitted the city.

She advised the Members that 56 out of 79 applications were recommended to receive support and provided an overview of the criteria for decision making, the principles of the assessment process, rationale for funding allocations and information on follow-up support.

In response to a Member's question, the Assistant Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager confirmed that, for those organisations which were unsuccessful under the 2016-2020 scheme, officers would help to identify other funding sources which might be available to them, including Small Grants Programmes managed by the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit, during their debrief meeting.

In response to a further Member's question, the Committee requested officers to consider ways in which additional support and advice could be given to the unsuccessful groups which had recently transferred in from a different council area.

The Committee adopted the recommendations for Core Multi-Annual Funding 2016-2020 as set out within the report.

Chairperson