

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 12th April, 2017

## MEETING OF City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Members present: Councillor Graham (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Haire, McGimpsey, L. Patterson and Spence; and  
Councillors Beattie, Boyle, Dorrian, Dudgeon,  
Hargey, Johnston, Kyle, Magee,  
McAteer, McDonough-Brown, Mullan,  
O'Hara and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;  
Mr. D. Durkan, Director of Development;  
Ms. N. Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Howard.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 8th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd April.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Beattie declared an interest in Item 3a, Presentation from Belfast Power Ltd., in that he was a Member of the Harbour Commission and he did not take part in the discussion.

Alderman McGimpsey and Councillors Dorrian, Johnston, Magee, McAteer and Mullan declared an interest in Item 4a, Gasworks Masterplan, in that they were Members of the Planning Committee, and Councillor Boyle declared an interest in the same item in that he was a Member of the Markets Development Committee. Upon receiving advice from the City Solicitor, the above mentioned seven Members left the room for the duration of the discussion on the item.

### **Matters Referred Back from Council**

### **Notice of Motion - Credit Unions**

(Councillor Attwood attended in connection with this item)

The Committee considered the following Notice of Motion which, in accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the Council had referred, without discussion, to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its meeting on 3rd April, 2017:

Proposed by Councillor Attwood and  
Seconded by Councillor Kyle

“This Council notes the importance of credit unions, as member-owned financial co-operatives, democratically controlled by their members, which ensure people in local communities have access to credit at affordable rates.

The Council notes that there are 158 credit unions in Northern Ireland, with 93 as part of the Irish League of Credit Unions and 42 with the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions.

The Council notes that there is an opportunity, in line with its commitment to develop co-operatives, to develop a partnership/joint venture with credit unions to deliver projects with social value including but not limited to social and affordable housing.

Accordingly, the Council agrees to engage with the credit union movement and investigate innovative models for project delivery.”

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Councillor Attwood was in attendance in relation to the Motion and he was invited to the table.

During discussion, the Committee was advised that a meeting had taken place with the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of City Centre Development in relation to the possibilities outlined in the motion.

The Director of Development advised that he was content to engage with the Credit Union movement, given the work that the team carried out in supporting co-operatives.

The Committee agreed that representatives from the Credit Union movement be invited to attend a future meeting.

#### **On-street Car Parking Charges: Response from Minister**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st February, had passed the following motion on On-Street Car Parking Charges, which had been proposed by Councillor Armitage and seconded by Councillor Long:

“This Council expresses its concern at the 16% increase in on-street car parking charges in Belfast, from £1.20 per hour to £1.40 per hour, announced by the Infrastructure Minister. This decision will adversely affect City Centre retail trade and will advantage the out-of-town shopping centres which are able to offer free car parking.

The Council agrees to seek an urgent meeting with the Minister to ensure that there is improved consultation with all stakeholders, including the Council, regarding the transportation issues within the City, including for those who use cars and public transport and those who cycle and walk.”

It was reported that a response had now been received from the former Minister for Infrastructure. In his response, the former Minister advised that, given the limited timeframe in advance of the election, he was unable to attend any additional meetings but that his officials were available to attend any proposed meetings.

The Committee noted the response from the former Minister.

The Committee was informed that TransportNI had recently advised that it was unable to attend the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 10th May or 14th June to present its Spring Report.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to hold a Special meeting, provisionally on Wednesday, 7th June, with representatives from the Department for Infrastructure being invited to attend to discuss the above mentioned transport issues in the City and also to receive the Spring Report from Transport NI.

### **Presentations**

#### **Belfast Power Limited**

(Councillor Beattie declared an interest in this item, in that he was a Member of the Harbour Commission and he did not take part in the discussion.)

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that the Department for Infrastructure was responsible for processing the planning application from Belfast Power Limited, given its regional significance, and that the City Solicitor had previously advised that the Council's Planning Committee would have a consultative role. She reminded those Members who were also Members of the Planning Committee that the City Solicitor had provided advice that he had no objection to them attending the presentation but that it might be appropriate for them to either not take part in any debate or to refrain from voicing opposition or support for the proposal.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Mr. Ciaran Devine, Director of Belfast Power Ltd., and Mr. Ryan McBirney, Project Manager at Strategic Planning, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Devine explained to the Committee that he and his brother, Stephen, had co-founded the parent company Evermore Energy, and also owned Belfast Power Ltd. He advised the Members that Evermore Energy had successfully developed Northern Ireland's largest renewable energy power station, Lisahally Combined Heat and Power Plant in Londonderry, for £83million. He outlined to the Committee that the company wanted to develop a similar project in Belfast but had found that there was a need for a much more substantial low-carbon power station.

Mr. McBirney outlined the proposal for their second project, a state-of-the-art, gas-fired power station at the Belfast Harbour Estate which would connect to Northern Ireland's main gas supply at Knocknagoney. Mr. Devine explained to the Members that, when operational, it would generate low-carbon electricity for over 500,000 homes and businesses throughout Northern Ireland.

Mr. Devine explained to the Members that the Belfast Power Station represented a new era in low-carbon energy generation in Northern Ireland and he outlined a number of economic and environmental benefits which it would bring. He outlined that they were currently securing £280million of private investment and that the station would create over 700 jobs during construction and 50 full-time, highly skilled roles when the plant was operational. The Committee was also advised that, when operational, the plant would significantly reduce Northern Ireland's CO2 emissions as well as helping to achieve security of electricity supply.

In response to a Member's question, Mr. Devine advised the Committee that the proposed Power Station would be significantly more flexible than older power stations,

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in that it could use wind power when available and that it would revert to gas-power at other times to safeguard constant supply.

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

**East Bank Draft Masterplan (Restricted)**

FIELD\_SUMMARY

Chairperson