

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 9th August, 2017

## MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor O'Donnell (Chairperson);  
The High Sheriff (Alderman Haire);  
Aldermen Kingston and McGimpsey; and  
Councillors Beattie, Boyle, Dorrian,  
Dudgeon, Graham, Hargey, Johnston,  
Kyle, Magee, McAteer, Mullan and O'Hara.

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

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman L. Patterson and Councillors McDonough-Brown and Walsh.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 14th June 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 July.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### **Matters Referred Back from Council/ Notices of Motion**

#### **Response from the Department for Infrastructure** **re: limited waiting outside shops**

The Committee was reminded that it had agreed that a letter be sent to the Department for Infrastructure requesting that limited waiting be introduced on arterial routes in areas close to bus stops, in order to avoid all-day commuter parking.

The Members were advised that the response stated that the Department had introduced limited waiting in a number of areas along the Lisburn Road, Ormeau Road and Stranmillis Road. It also highlighted that, in conjunction with the Belfast Rapid transit project, it was proposing to implement limited waiting in a number of lay-bys along the Andersonstown Road, Falls Road, Divis Street, Upper Newtownards Road, Albertbridge Road and Stewartstown Road.

The Committee noted the response and agreed to provide officers with any specific locations for the consideration of the Department.

**Restricted Item**

**The Information contained in the following report is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014**

**Update on City Centre Fund Acquisition**

The Director of City Centre Development provided the Committee with an update on the Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) between the Council and McAleer and Rushe, which acquired the former Belfast Telegraph building in October, 2016.

The Members were provided with an overview of the work which was being undertaken regarding the site. The Director advised that a short term license had been agreed with a company to occupy a large section of the ground floor of the site for nine months, with an option to renew for a further nine months. She explained that the interim license would secure an income for the Partnership and would address some of the rates liabilities. The Committee noted that the area would be temporarily used as a venue for entertainment activity and other uses, and that the Council would work closely with the tenant to jointly programme use of the site at various points throughout the year, including culture night.

The Committee was advised that the long term plan of the Partnership was to secure the BBC as the tenant. It was reported that the LLP was committed to pursuing the BBC as the preferred tenant and that the competitive process would begin later in the year.

In addition, the Chief Executive outlined that the Permanent Secretary for the Department of Communities had informed her that, while Streets Ahead Phase 3 remained a high priority for the Department, the procurement exercise for the project had not progressed any further due to the financial position of the Department for 2017-2018. The Chief Executive advised the Members that the Department had indicated that unless it was allocated additional Capital resources, the procurement exercise for the construction works for Phase 3 was unlikely to be progressed in 2017-2018. She explained that, consequently, once a Minister was in place, the tender process would have to start from the beginning which could delay the project well beyond the scheduled dates of the University construction work and other sites being developed in the area.

The Committee agreed that a letter be sent to the Permanent Secretary, with input from the City Solicitor, asking that the Department reconsider its position on Streets Ahead Phase 3, given that a significant amount of public money had already been spent in bringing the project to that stage.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the progress on the former Belfast Telegraph site and the partnership's intention to:

- Issue a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) and engage directly with elected representatives, businesses, communities and other stakeholders later this summer ahead of submitting an outline planning application;
  - Undertake branding and marketing of the site to coincide with community engagement and planning milestones; and
  - Continue to develop a design concept in anticipation of a BBC request for proposals; and
2. noted the agreed short term license and the ongoing discussions with other potential occupants from the creative and digital sector; and
3. agreed that a letter be sent to the Permanent Secretary for the Department for Communities, to include input from the City Solicitor, asking that the Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3 project be reconsidered in terms of the allocation of funding, given that a significant amount of public money had already been spent to bring the project to its current phase.

### **Requests to Present to Committee**

#### **Invest NI Regional Briefing for Belfast**

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from Invest NI on the Belfast Regional Briefing 2017 at a future meeting and noted that the Regional Briefing document would be circulated to all Members once finalised.

#### **NI Water**

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

### **Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

#### **City Centre Living - Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report to advise Committee of a suggested approach to develop discussions on city centre living.**

2.0 **Recommendations**

2.1 **Members are asked to:**

- consider undertaking a study visit to examine good practice in terms of city centre housing developments in September 2017;
- note the proposal to facilitate a workshop on the issue of city centre living in October 2017.

3.0 **Main report**

**Background**

3.1 In March 2017, the City Growth and Regeneration Committee received an update on work underway to identify the key issues around liveability and increasing the residential population in the city centre.

3.2 In May 2017, during discussion on the City Centre Programme for 2017/18, Members discussed the importance of addressing the needs of families living in the city centre, in terms of schools and play facilities and noted that a workshop on the issue of city centre living would be held at a future date.

**Work Underway or Undertaken to date**

3.3 **Local Development Plan**

A Population and Housing Growth Study was completed in October 2016 to help inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP). In addition to this study, a series of Topic Papers were prepared that relate to Population Change and Housing and the City Centre, which offered an opportunity to examine the contribution the City Centre can make to supporting the potential for growing the population of the city.

3.4 The Council undertook an extensive public consultation on the preferred options and engagement with key stakeholders which concluded on 20th April 2017. The Preferred Options Paper noted that there are underused, derelict sites and significant areas of brownfield land which we are encouraged to redevelop by regional policy and which lie within the city centre. The responses to the POP consultation were published this month and it is anticipated that the draft Plan Strategy will be published for consultation in early 2018.

3.5 To supplement the preferred options research an Urban Capacity Study is currently underway to identify where any additional housing requirements can be accommodated, including the contribution that the City Centre can make through the re-use of vacant buildings on upper floors and housing as a component of mixed use developments. This will be incorporated into the Plan Strategy which will be subject to an independent examination before it can be adopted as the first part of the new policy framework for the city. Following adoption of the Plan Strategy, the preparation for the Local Policies Plan will be commenced including, where appropriate, work to set out more detailed policies and site specific designations.

3.6 Department for Communities

The Department for Communities undertook a second stage of a Review of the Role and Regulation of the Private Rented Sector with a public consultation exercise on the document taking place between January and April 2017.

The Council's response was reported to the People and Communities Committee on 7th March 2017. The Review set out proposals on:

- Supply
- Affordability
- Security of Tenure
- Tenancy Management
- Property Standards
- Dispute Resolution

3.7 In respect of housing supply, which could be of particular relevance in the city centre, it promoted the following proposals:

Supply Proposal 1: Commission work to gauge the appetite of institutional investors with existing portfolios of private rented sector properties in Great Britain to invest in Northern Ireland and the conditions needed to support such investment;

Supply Proposal 2: Explore opportunities to use money available for shared housing through the Fresh Start agreement to incentivise the development of more mixed-tenure housing areas, including private rented accommodation, underpinned by a shared ethos;

Supply Proposal 3: Scope the opportunities with housing associations for greater involvement in the private rented sector.

DfC is currently considering the comments received through the consultation exercise.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)

- 3.8 NIHE have stated that there is a high social housing need for Belfast which has grown over recent years. The latest figures for 2017 show 10,738 households on the waiting list, of which approximately 7,322 were considered to be in housing stress. They note that Housing Associations are finding it increasingly difficult to acquire land for social housing development and advocates that additional land should be made available to Housing Associations to develop much needed social housing. NIHE would like to see sites in Belfast City Centre being made available for affordable housing. Affordable housing includes social rented homes and well as co-ownership housing and NIHE's Shared Future Housing Programme.
- 3.9 On 2nd August 2017, NIHE will be presenting its Housing Investment Plan for Belfast (Appendix 1) to the People and Communities Committee. All elected members will be invited to attend. NIHE has responded to the Council on its LDP Preferred Options Paper and is supportive of promoting affordable housing through the LDP.

Private Housing for Sale and the Private Rented Sector

- 3.10 The NIHE Housing Investment Plan (HIP) notes that the local housing market is slowly recovering from the economic crash of 10 years ago. House prices have increased slowly in recent years but private sector building activity remains low and mortgage lending remains inhibited despite historically low interest rates and prices in Belfast actually fell in the latter part of 2016. There is considerable variation across different property types throughout Belfast. Semi-detached houses and apartments have reduced in price over the past year while detached houses and bungalows have increased. First time buyers are still experiencing difficulty in obtaining mortgage finance; this effectively puts a brake on market activity.
- 3.11 Recent developments such as 'The Gallery', an apartment block at Dublin Road, suggest there is some interest developing in housing for private sale. This might be expected to continue as other sites come forward for development. Housing for sale is another form of tenure required as an important element in a successful and vibrant city centre and home ownership is an integral element within new housing areas which can create balanced and sustainable communities

- 3.12 The HIP identifies the Private Rented Sector (PRS) as continuing to play a significant role in the local housing market. Local estate agents report that there is continuing strong demand for private rental accommodation at the top end of the market and in the Lisburn Road, Ormeau Road and Stranmillis areas. Terrace properties and apartments bought during the 'buy to let' boom of the early 2000s provide most of the stock in the PRS.

Local estate agents have indicated that key drivers affecting the PRS in Belfast include:

- high demand for private rental;
- no net additional supply;
- high demand and low turnover in the social housing sector;
- job and income uncertainty;
- lower numbers of private new build development;
- lending restrictions;
- an oversupply in certain areas.

- 3.13 PRS will play an increasingly important role meeting the needs of younger households on lower incomes, who in previous decades would have become first time buyers. High levels of demand for social housing in some areas will also continue to underpin the demand for private rented accommodation.

- 3.14 The March 2017 report to Committee on City Centre Living emphasised the importance of the Council working in partnership with DfC and NIHE to determine the contribution that the city centre can make to growing Belfast's population and increasing housing supply. It is proposed that a Members' workshop considering the issues around city centre living would be valuable in taking this process forward. If supported, a study visit to examine good practice in terms of city centre housing developments will be arranged in advance of the workshop to allow best practice ideas to inform and assist at the workshop.

#### Connectivity with Neighbouring Communities

- 3.15 In addition to a number of apartments in private ownership and private rented tenures at locations such as Adelaide Street, Castle Street/King Street and Victoria Square, it is important to recognise that there are also established residential communities in, and immediately adjacent to the city centre. At its meeting in May,

Committee recognised the importance of engaging with these communities by agreeing that the City Centre Development Team will develop a new engagement plan covering strategic regeneration across Belfast, with specific focus on the city centre and surrounding communities. The plan will engage a wide range of stakeholders, but with a particular aim to involve and empower residents, ensuring impacts are understood and benefits shared. An internal trawl is underway to identify a dedicated resource to develop and implement the strategy.

**Finance and Resource Implications**

- 3.16 Any additional resource implications associated with this report can be met from approved budgets.

**Equality and Good Relations Implications**

- 3.17 Equality and good relations screening will be conducted as required, in parallel with any future proposed consultation process.”

A Member emphasised the importance of engagement with those communities which currently lived in the city centre while simultaneously seeking to increase the residential population in the city centre. The Member highlighted that it was crucial that Belfast kept a mix of social, privately rented and privately owned housing in the city centre and that it did not follow Manchester’s approach, which had driven working class families out with increased rents. The Member added that, in terms of repopulating the city centre, imaginative thinking was required to redefine how we consider family homes

In response to a further Member’s question, regarding the fact that regeneration powers had not been transferred to Councils, the Director of City Centre Development advised the Committee that, through Local Development Plan, and as the Planning Authority for the City, the Council had the power to determine the mix and use of areas of land.

A further Member stated that, while creative thinking was to be encouraged, not all housing models which were used in London would necessarily work in Belfast.

The Committee:

1. agreed to undertake a study visit to London to examine good practice in terms of city centre housing developments in September/October 2017, and that the Director of City Centre Development would circulate details of the visit to the Committee, with one Member from each of the six main parties permitted to attend; and
2. noted that a follow-up Committee workshop would be held on the issue of city centre living in October 2017.



## Positioning Belfast to Compete

### Capital of Culture - Update Report

The Director of Development updated the Members on the development of the bid with Derry City and Strabane District Council to become the UK designated city for the European Capital of Culture 2023.

The Members were reminded that a joint workshop had been held at the Seamus Heaney Centre, Bellaghy, on 19th June where Members from both Councils had explored the opportunities and benefits of progressing the bid, gained insight into the experiences of other European Capitals of Culture in terms of the positive legacy which had been created and shaped the emerging vision and themes of the bid.

The Director advised the Committee that significant progress had been made on developing the bid with a number of activities having taken place, including:

- an official media launch in both cities which had resulted in significant broadcast, print and online coverage;
- an ongoing civic engagement programme with over 2,000 people across both Council areas having directly engaged with the European Capital of Culture team which helped to shape the emerging themes;
- a detailed community engagement through both Councils in terms of summer schemes and activities, as well as partner organisations; and
- a series of sessions with the wider cultural sector to begin to develop programme ideas

He explained that, in order to ensure further Member engagement, it was proposed that a second workshop would be held at the beginning of September. It was outlined that the workshop would provide Members with a detailed update on the engagement process and the associated themes for the bid, an overview of programme content and discussion on the level of financial commitment required and the associated funding strategy.

Given the timelines associated with the submission of the final stage 1 bid, the Director explained that an update report would be submitted to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its meeting on 13th September, with the final proposal and financial information being submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its consideration on 22nd September, 2017.

The Director informed the Committee that a request had been received for the Lord Mayor to attend the launch of the Belfast International Arts Festival 2017, in New York, on 18th September, 2017. He explained that this would provide a platform to promote the European Capital of Culture bid as part of a three day programme and that there would be opportunities to undertake further engagement on the key themes emerging for the joint bid. As well as engaging with the diaspora based in New York, he

confirmed to the Members that invitations would also be extended to sister city colleagues in Boston and Nashville.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Kingston,  
Seconded by Councillor Dorrian,

That the Committee agrees that the Lord Mayor and two officers should not attend the launch of the Belfast International Arts Festival in New York on 18th September, 2017.

On a vote by show of hands, seven Members voted for the proposal and eight against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the Committee considered the recommendations as outlined in the report, namely, that the Committee:

1. noted the contents of the report, including the ongoing progress against the critical timelines;
2. noted that a workshop with Members would take place in September 2017, with invites being extended to all Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee as well as the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Party Group Leaders (or nominees); and
3. agreed the attendance of the Lord Mayor, one senior and one accompanying officer to attend an engagement programme, including the launch of Belfast International Arts Festival in New York on 18th September, 2017.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Boston Update and Outward Mission**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

##### **1.1 The purpose of the report is to:**

- **Update Members on International Relations activity over the summer period, focusing on the city of Boston, and to seek approval for Members’ participation in an October outward mission to Boston in October 2017.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note recent developments with respect to the Belfast-Boston Sister City relationship;
- Agree to the attendance of the Lord Mayor and the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, or their nominees along with one Officer on an outward mission to Boston, during the week of 16–20 Oct 2017. The cost of this visit will not exceed £5,000.

**3.0 Main report**

**Boston Outward Visit**

- 3.1** Members will recall that, in March 2017, the City Growth and Regeneration Committee approved a new International Relations Framework for the period 2016-2021. Members will be aware that this Framework delivers primarily on the formal relationships already in existence through the Sister City Agreements with Shenyang, Boston and Nashville, the Memorandum of Understanding with Dublin, and developing relationships with London.
- 3.2** This March Committee report also included an annual action plan outlining upcoming events, projects and key opportunities for collaboration with city partners to promote Belfast on the international stage as a place to visit, study, work and do business. This plan included details of a proposed Belfast visit to Boston in the current financial year, subject to agreement with partner organisations.
- 3.3** Members will be aware that a cross-cutting and high profile delegation from Boston visited the city in June 2017. This visit marked the third anniversary of the signing of the Sister City agreement between Boston and Belfast – the first Sister City agreement signed by Mayor Walsh when he came into office. The delegation comprised senior representatives from a number of fields, including further and higher education, arts and culture and urban regeneration. In addition to meetings with elected members, the representatives also engaged in one-to-one meetings with their Belfast-based counterparts to either explore new areas of collaboration or to build on existing relationships and review how these could move to the next level.

- 3.4 In advance of the proposed outward visit, Belfast City Council will also host both Boston and Nashville in a joint inward mission from 4 – 6 October 2017. While details of the delegations from both cities are currently being finalised, it is expected that up to 60 representatives across both cities will be in Belfast at that time. In order to maximise the value of the inward visit and to ensure the appropriate level of civic welcome, Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee will be invited to meet the delegates on a number of occasions over the three days. Further details on the draft programme will be brought back to the September meeting of this Committee and invitations to the respective events will be circulated as appropriate.
- 3.5 In order to maintain momentum on the Boston link, an outward mission is scheduled for Autumn. Having spoken to Mayor Walsh's officials, it is recommended that BCC undertakes this visit during the week of 16 – 20 Oct 2017, to coincide with the Boston Women's Entrepreneurs week. The City of Boston is keen to identify areas of business collaboration as the next focus of activity under Sister Cities. Having undertaken engagement with local partners and building on an understanding of the emerging opportunities already in the pipeline, it is proposed that the focus of the mission will also be on a number of other priority themes including:
- **Tourism promotion and development:** Building on the opportunity created by the new direct air route by Norwegian Airlines, it is proposed that a tourism showcase event will take place. The Council will work with its strategic partners including Visit Belfast and Tourism Ireland to ensure that the messaging and city proposition is in place and also to secure interest from Boston-based partners interested in promoting Belfast as both a leisure and business tourism destination.
  - **Exploring the opportunities to collaborate in the field of Life and Health Sciences:** Last year, Belfast hosted a joint meeting in Boston of companies operating in this field from Boston, Nashville and Belfast. There are opportunities to expand on this initial engagement and to explore opportunities for local companies to become involved in new export markets.
  - **Co-hosting a cyber security event to explore potential cooperation in this sector.**
  - **Reinforcing the civic linkages:** Mayor Walsh is coming to the end of his first term in office and will be working on his campaign to stand for another term. Given that his first international engagement was with Belfast when he was appointed Mayor, he is keen to review Sister City activity and outputs to date and set the

agenda for ongoing engagement between the two cities.

- 3.6 Staff within the International Relations Unit have commenced initial programme planning with Boston for a mission in the week of 16 – 20 October, and will develop a full programme of events which will reflect the strategic priorities of the International Relations Framework and link the delegation with key city stakeholders in the areas identified above.**
- 3.7 Members will be aware that Boston is one of the three Sister Cities with which Belfast is linked. Members have previously asked that they are kept up to speed with progress and outcomes of International Relations work. A six-monthly update report will be presented to the Committee in September 2017.**
- 3.8 Members are asked to agree to the participation of the Lord Mayor, Chair of City Growth and Regeneration Committee or their respective nominees and two officers (one senior) on the above programme for this activity which will be met through the International Unit budget.**
- 3.9 Financial and Resource Implications**
- There are no additional financial and resource implications.**
- 3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications**
- No specific equality or good relations implications.”**

The Director of Development recommended the attendance of two officers, one of which would be a senior officer, on the outward mission to Boston, given the full programme of events.

He also advised the Committee that, as part of the engagement programme, a Boston-based theatre company would produce four of Samuel Beckett's short plays at The MAC Belfast, in November 2017.

A Member requested that officers seek to engage with Babson College, Boston, given its links with the Ulster University.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted recent developments with respect to the Belfast-Boston Sister City relationship;
2. agreed to the attendance of the Lord Mayor and the Chairperson of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, or their

- nominees, along with one senior officer and one additional officer, on an outward mission to Boston during the week of 16–20 Oct 2017. (The cost of this visit would not exceed £5,000);
3. noted that four of Samuel Beckett’s short plays would be brought to The MAC Belfast, in November 2017, by Boston-based theatre company “The Poets’ Theatre”; and
  4. agreed that officers would engage with Babson College, Boston.

### **Belfast Brand - Update**

The Chief Executive welcomed Ms. Marie Clarke to the meeting, who had recently taken up the position as Marketing Manager in the City Centre Development team.

The Chief Executive provided the Committee with an update on the roll-out of the new visual identity for Belfast. She reminded the Committee that the new branding would replace the current city identity of the Belfast “B”. The Committee was reminded that it had agreed to the new City branding, as presented by McCadden Design at its meeting in May 2017, and that McCadden had since engaged in consultation with a series of the City’s stakeholders.

The Chief Executive advised the Members that, while there would be no official launch for the new visual branding, it would gradually begin to be used in a series of flagship projects involving City partners including Visit Belfast, Titanic Belfast, the Belfast Waterfront, Translink and key developers in the City from the end of August 2017.

The Marketing Manager added that the Council would use the new branding in the hoardings around the Andersonstown, Brook and Robinson Leisure Centres which were being redeveloped as well as advertisements for Council-organised events such as the Autumn Fair and the Halloween Monster Mash.

In response to a Member’s question in relation to the importance of briefing the media on the new visual identity, the Chief Executive agreed that engagement with the press would take place.

After discussion, the Committee noted the approach for Belfast’s new visual identity.

### **Events and Festivals Funding**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request approval from Members to financially support a range of music Events and Festivals within the current financial year and during the financial year 18/19 only, pending the outcome of the current strategic review of Events and Festivals. The events are as follows:**

- BBC Music Events 2018/19 (BBC Big Music Weekend, Radio 2 Folk Awards & Proms)
- Gradam Ceoil 2017/18 & 2018/19
- Féile an Phobail 2018/19
- Other Voices 2018/19

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Approve, in principle, provision of a financial contribution towards some of the costs associated with the following Events & Festivals as part of a potential year of music.
- Gradam Ceoil 17/18 - £50,000
- Gradam Ceoil 18/19 - £50,000
- Féile an Phobail 18/19 - £180,000
- Other Voices 18/19 - £40,000
- BBC Music Events 18/19 (BBC Big Music Weekend, Radio 2 Folk Awards & Proms) - £200,000

**2.2 Based on the 2017/18 City Events Unit budget £200,000 would be available to support these events in 2018/19. (During 2017/18 City Events Unit have funded the Women's Rugby World Cup, the World B Ice Hockey Championships, the UEFA U-19 Women's Football Championships and the World 24 hour Endurance Race, totalling £200,000. None of these events will take place in Belfast during 2018/19).**

**2.3 Given the timescales required for the planning of the BBC Music Events it is recommended that the available £200,000 is allocated by Committee to the BBC events. Members should note that if approved, the funding of £50,000 for Gradam Ceoil 2017/18 would come from within existing departmental budgets. This would leave a shortfall in funding of £270,000.**

**2.4 The Committee is therefore further asked to:**

- Agree to refer the remainder of the funding requirement to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September with a request to give priority to the remaining events and festivals when it is considering in-year re-allocations at the half year or year end.

**3.0 Main Report**

**Strategic Context**

- 3.1** As Members will be aware, Festivals and Events International Consultants have been appointed to develop an Events and Festival Strategy, this will be completed in December 2017. This Strategy will set the direction of travel in relation to the future decisions on Council's funding of Belfast's Events and Festivals for 2019/20 and beyond.
- 3.2** Investment in Events and Festivals strengthens the profile of the City as a culturally vibrant destination, thus supporting the Belfast Agenda and also aligning well with the current bid for European Capital of Culture in 2023. They also reinforce the commitment to build the city's cultural profile and showcase its creative talent. It is considered that support for the Events & Festivals noted in this report will make an overwhelmingly positive contribution towards the promotion of Belfast and its cultural offer.
- 3.3** In the interim period, 2018/19 will effectively be a transition year with regard to funding of Events and Festivals. As a consequence, Members are asked to approve funding towards a range of events and festivals in 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- 3.4** The proposals tie in with the Council's Cultural Framework Action Plan and the four strands which are: Distinctly Belfast, Inspiring Communities, Attracting Audiences, and Strengthening the Sector. Additionally, they are also in keeping with the emerging Place Positioning brand.
- 3.5** The Events and Festivals in this report contribute to the use of public space, key conference and cultural venues, community cohesion, tourism, and the Belfast Agenda pillars. The 'City Development' theme of the Belfast Agenda focuses on supporting the cultural regeneration of the City as a means of supporting inclusive growth and profiling Belfast as a dynamic business location.
- 3.6** It is worth highlighting that the Council has already approved £180,000 in 2018/19 towards the UK National Pipe Bands Championships. This demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment towards innovative and iconic music events throughout the city. The Council also provides funding through a variety of grant schemes for a range of other exciting Events and Festivals throughout the city. As mentioned previously, decisions regarding funding decisions for 2019/20 onwards will be informed by the outcomes in the Events and Festival Strategy.



- 3.7 The UK National Pipe Bands Championships and the other events noted in this report will all help position Belfast as a unique musical destination, and will undoubtedly have great appeal for both local residents, tourists, and people across the region.

Key Issues

BBC Music Events

- 3.8 Officers have been in discussion with the BBC (BBC NI and BBC national) in relation to staging three significant music events for Belfast during 2018.
- 3.9 The three potential events are as follows:
- BBC Six Music Festival as part of BBC’s Big Music Weekend, Titanic Slipways, 25th and 26th May, 2018;
  - BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, Ulster Hall, date tbc; and
  - BBC Proms in the Park, Titanic Slipways, 8th September, 2018.
- 3.10 The first of these would be BBC Radio 2’s National Folk Awards. The Awards celebrate outstanding achievement within the field of folk music, with the overarching aim of raising the profile of folk and acoustic music. The awards have been given annually since 2000. Previous Award recipients have included: Joan Baez, Cat Stevens, John Martyn, Steve Earle, The Dubliners, Kate Rusby, Cara Dillon, Don McLean, The Chieftains, Joan Armatrading and James Taylor.
- 3.11 The event attracts significant national and international media attention and is broadcast live on BBC Radio 2 and via the BBC online TV service. The Awards normally take place in April, however, if approved, Officers would seek to move the event to May 2018 so it could be intertwined with the proposed BBC Big Music Weekend inclusive of the BBC Six Music Festival and the city’s annual Belfast Titanic Maritime Festival.
- 3.12 The second of the proposed events is the BBC Six Music Festival. This would be part of the BBC Big Music Weekend. This would see four days of music across the four Home Nations, with events at: Scone Castle (Scotland); Coventry; Swansea and if approved by Members at the Titanic Slipways on the 25th and 26th May, 2018. In 2017, Glasgow hosted the Six Music Festival which included the following line up:

Goldfrapp, The Jesus and Mary Chain, The Shins, Bonobo, Belle & Sebastian, Depeche Mode and another twenty artists. The event is comparable to the BBC Radio One Big Weekend which was held as part of the Derry~Londonderry Year of Culture in 2013.

- 3.13 The third event would see the return of the BBC's Proms in the Park concert to Belfast. This event has previously attracted an audience of over 11,000 people with up to 75,000 applications for tickets. It is proposed that the live broadcast concert would be staged at the Titanic Slipways and the event would link to national and international audiences across multiple BBC broadcast platforms.
- 3.14 It is envisaged that the three BBC events would generate extensive economic value for the city as well as extensive positive media coverage.

#### Gradam Ceoil

- 3.15 Gradam Ceoil is an annual awards ceremony which celebrates the best of traditional Irish music and song. It comprises a gala event as well as an extensive outreach and engagement programme before the event to maximise impact and economic benefit.
- 3.16 Gradam Ceoil organisers have approached the Council to explore the opportunity to host the 2018 event. To date, it has been held in cities such as Galway and Cork and it is broadcast live on TG4 and also live-streamed. The overall cost of the event is circa £200,000 with a proposed council contribution of £50,000. It is likely to take place at end of February 2018 in the Belfast Waterfront however there is some flexibility on this date. If the Council supports the event this year, the organisers would be keen to explore the opportunity for a multi-annual engagement (potentially to 2021).
- 3.17 Based on the experience of the city of Cork, it is estimated that Gradam Ceoil will have a direct economic impact in the region of £300,000 over the weekend, in terms of visitor spend. Furthermore, the live coverage on TG4 and the potential engagement of BBC (particularly BBC radio and online) and BBC Alba (Scottish channel), as well as PBS in USA (broadcast as recorded coverage), will all provide meaningful opportunities to showcase Belfast as a city of music, arts and culture.
- 3.18 There will be excellent opportunities to advertise and promote the city over the weekend. Gradam Ceoil will help

attract new visitors to Belfast and make more people aware of the city's cultural offer.

#### Other Voices

- 3.19 Members will recall that Committee approved financial support of £40,000 towards the 'Other Voices' event, in Belfast in October 2017, following a report in June 2017. Since this, the organisers have established the Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts as the hub for the October 2017 events. As noted in the previous Committee report, it is intended that the 2017 event will be a precursor to a larger Belfast event in 2018 and onwards.
- 3.20 Other Voices has attracted a range of well-known acts since its inception in 2002. These have included Willie Nelson, Ellie Goulding, Gregory Porter, Amy Winehouse and Mumford and Sons. In addition, it has attracted many indigenous acts and has provided a platform to highlight up-and-coming talent. The event is currently broadcast on RTE's television and digital platforms. It also involves a wide range of outreach and engagement activity with local residents and those involved in the culture and arts sector.
- 3.21 The Other Voices team is currently exploring potential funding partners as well as building the local networks at community level to create a solid foundation for future activities. Experience from previous events suggests that it can have a significant economic, social and cultural impact on the local area. Other Voices continues to present an opportunity to demonstrate Belfast as city of musical prowess and to attract excellent media coverage. As a result, it is recommended that Belfast City Council continues to support this unique initiative in 2018/19.

#### Féile an Phobail 2018

- 3.22 2018 marks the 30th anniversary / birthday of Féile an Phobail. It is marketed as Ireland's biggest community arts festival and summer school. Féile was established in 1988, as a direct response to the turbulence and conflict at the time. The purpose of the festival has always been to celebrate the positive side of the community - its creativity, energy, passion for arts, culture and sport.
- 3.23 Féile is recognised for its collaborative community approach and it is intended that its 30th anniversary year festival will bring an inclusive programme of events which will demonstrate good relations in action, attracting more

tourism and visitor spend and building increased social and cultural capital.

- 3.24 The organisers are presently undertaking a stakeholder engagement strategy and have commenced consultation and planning for 2018 events. Since July 2017, workshops have been held with over 30 arts, cultural and tourism organisations from across the City. One of the key themes that has emerged from these workshops is 'ambition'. Taking this theme and the new event space at the Falls Park, they are aiming to attract some of the biggest artists from across the globe in 2018.
- 3.25 For 2018/19, Féile aims to create a year-round programme of inclusive and accessible arts and cultural events, delivered across the City with four specific festivals during the year. This will include 400+ events with an audience reach of up to 100,000 people.
- 3.26 We have committed to support Féile with £39,000 per annum under the Core Multi Annual Fund 2016-2020. However as this is its 30th anniversary, the festival will comprise a much broader scope and audience reach, so Féile has requested support from Belfast City Council totalling £180,000. The festival presents a wonderful opportunity to showcase Belfast as a centre of music, culture and arts, it will increase visitor numbers to the city and will enhance the city's reputation.

#### Equality and Good Relations Implications

- 3.27 The Events and Festivals will all be equality proofed and there will be a significant complementary suite of outreach and engagement programmes open to all communities.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.28 The financial support required from Belfast City Council for each initiative is as follows:
- BBC Music Events 2018/19 - £200,000 – as noted, from within existing departmental budgets
  - Gradam Ceoil 2017/18 – £50,000 – as noted, from within existing departmental budgets.
  - Gradam Ceoil 2018/19- £50,000
  - Féile an Phobail 2018/19 - £180,000
  - Other Voices 2018/19 - £40,000
- 3.29 In total £470,000 additional funding is required to support these Events. Based on the 2017/18 City Events Unit budget level, £200,000 would be available to support the BBC events

**in 2018/19. The Gradam Ceoil event requiring a £50,000 would also be funded from within existing departmental budgets. This would leave a shortfall of £270,000. It is further recommended that the Committee agree to refer the remainder of the funding requirement to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in September as a request to give priority to the funding of the remaining events and festivals when it is considering in-year re-allocations at the half year or year-end.”**

During discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Kingston,  
Seconded by Councillor Dorrian,

*That the Committee agrees to remove the wording ‘to give priority to the remaining events and festivals’ under 2.4 of the recommendations, to read: ‘That the Committee agrees to refer the remainder of the funding requirement to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September, when it is considering in-year re-allocations at the half year or year end’.*

On a vote by show of hands eight Members voted for the proposal and eight against.

As there was an equality of votes, the Chairperson exercised her second and casting vote against the Motion and it was accordingly declared lost.

In response to a Member’s question regarding the projected benefits for the City, through hosting the BBC music events, the Director of Development agreed to submit a report to a future meeting.

A Member expressed concerns that the EastSide Arts festival operated on a significantly smaller budget than Féile an Phobail and that the Committee needed to be mindful that it was fair in its funding allocations.

In response to a Member’s question, the Director also agreed to submit a report outlining Féile an Phobail’s rationale for requesting the additional funding for the festival’s 30th anniversary in 2018/2019.

After further discussion, the Committee:

1. adopted the recommendations as outlined in the report; in particular, given the timescales required for the planning of the BBC Music Events, recommended that the available £200,000 was allocated by Committee to the BBC events;
2. agreed that organisers from both the Eastside Arts Festival and Féile an Phobail be invited to present to a future meeting of the Committee; and

3. agreed that Festivals and Events International (FEI) be invited to present to a future meeting of the Committee to provide it with an overview of the Events and Festival Strategy.

### **Growing Businesses and the Economy**

#### **Educational Inequalities Action Plan**

The Director reminded the Committee that the Area Learning Communities had presented, in conjunction with a number of local school principals, to the Committee at its meeting on 14th June.

He advised the Members that many of the city's schools, colleges and universities rivalled the best in the world, with students in Northern Ireland achieving higher grades than their counterparts in all other UK regions at both GCSE and A-Level. He pointed out that, while 60% of pupils in Belfast achieved 5 or more GCSEs, or equivalent, at grades A\*-C in 2014/15, that meant that 40% of our young people reaching the age of 16 had not achieved that standard. The Committee was advised that the figure stood at only 35% for those young people which were entitled to Free School Meals (FSME).

The Members were reminded that social disadvantage had a significant impact on educational attainment levels and that the Belfast Agenda contained commitments to ensure that children and young people would get the best start in life.

He presented a number of proposals to the Members, which were linked to the Employability and Skills Framework 2015-2025, and included:

- career advisory and employer engagement initiatives - which would build on existing campaigns such as the Department of the Economy's Connect to Success work experience portal, and would also include paid work placements, with a proposed budget of £70,000;
- development of digital skills - to ensure young people were equipped with the skills required for future industry, with a proposed budget of £60,000; and
- support for targeted activities to help young people who had recently fallen out of the education system - where the Council would work to add value to existing interventions provided by the Prince's Trust, with a budget of £70,000.

The Director confirmed to the Members that the budgets were already available for the work to be undertaken and that they had been approved as part of the estimates process.

He highlighted to the Committee that, while the above activities were for the 2017/2018 financial year, officers were continuing to engage with government departments and other councils to identify other areas for collaboration.

In relation to the paid, 4-6 week work placements, a Member requested whether students could be identified earlier in the year so that linkages between the students and the companies could be made prior to the placements taking place, in order to increase the likelihood of engagement and full attendance throughout the placement.

The Member also enquired about the use of Belfast Metropolitan's E3 campus, to which the Director advised the Committee that discussions were ongoing in relation to its possible designation as a digital hub.

A Member stated that it was well-known that it was extremely difficult for a child to get a worthwhile placement for their "work experience" week if they did not have the right connections through their parents or family friends.

The Director explained to the Members that, as a key employer within the city, the Council had a vital position in leading the way for employers. He advised the Committee that Business in the Community was launching a new Business Education Charter and was encouraging employers to sign up and pledge their support to engage more organisations in order that 90% of children leaving primary school would achieve level 4 in literacy and numeracy by 2020.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Development agreed to ask the Prince's Trust for a postcode breakdown of where it's funding was allocated to within the city.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted and approved priority actions for development and delivery in conjunction with relevant partner organisations in 2017/18 and approved expenditure of budgets, noting that the skills development budgets had already been agreed as part of the annual estimates process and had been set aside within the Departmental budget; and
2. agreed that Belfast City Council would sign up to the Business in the Community (BITC) Business Education Charter.

### **Community Based Tourism Proposals**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **"1.0 Purpose of Report**

##### **1.1 The purpose of this report is to:**

- **Provide Members with an update on the work to date on the Community Based Tourism Programme**
- **Seek Members' approval to progress with a number of priority actions under this programme for the 2017/18 financial year.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the contents of the report; and
- Consider the key areas of focus for 2017-18 as set out and endorse delivery of the actions and associated budgets as outlined.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**3.1 The Integrated Tourism Strategy was approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in May 2015. The Strategy was developed in tandem with the City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan and the proposals are aligned to support the future development, economic growth and profile of the city.**

**3.2 The vision is to develop Belfast as a city that wants to welcome the world and share its history by creating a destination that the world wants to experience first hand. The strategic goal is to double the value of tourism by 2020 with the focus on achieving this by generating discretionary tourist overnight stays, especially higher value leisure and business tourism.**

**3.3 The strategy sets out a number of priority areas for investment, namely:**

- Visitor management – providing excellence in visitor management standards through our £1.8 million investment in Visit Belfast on an annual basis, as well as securing more recently, coach parking in the city.
- Capacity building development – building the capacity of locally-based tourism providers to develop their products and sell more effectively with plans now in place to progress Community Tourism.
- Business tourism – supporting investment in business tourism through our investment in the subvention programme in partnership with Tourism NI.
- Increased tourism product – particularly through new hotel developments and progress to develop the Belfast Story Visitor attraction.
- Improved quality of service – improving customer service standards across all hospitality establishments through the provision of training programme such as World Host and training



programmes offered through the hospitality academy which is managed by Council's Economic Initiatives team.

- Increased marketing activity – targeting key market segments and partnering with organisations through partnership working with Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland and Visit Belfast.

- 3.4 Members will be aware that approval was given in May 2017 for the delivery of this year's Tourism Plan. One of the key actions contained within that report was the development of community tourism and the importance of supporting the development of local tourism products across the city which will ensure the benefits of tourism growth are felt across Belfast – not just in the city centre.

#### Local Tourism

- 3.5 Since then, Officers have been working with key organisations including Tourism NI and local tourism organisations such as East West Tourism Development Steering Group (involving East Belfast Partnership and Fáilte Feirste Thiar) to identify and explore opportunities for supporting the development of local tourism. From the engagement to date with these organisations, officers have developed a proposal for enhancing local tourism in the current financial year.

#### Programme Overview

- 3.6 The aim of the community-based tourism programme is to develop tourism infrastructure across the city, provide support to tourism-related businesses and enhance the product offer in local areas. The programme will focus on enhancing capacity by upskilling local organisations and businesses with a view to improving quality standards and diversifying the product offer and will add value to the current tourism offering. In order to provide oversight and to ensure alignment with wider investment in the sector and with local regeneration activity, the development and delivery of the programme will be overseen by a stakeholder advisory committee which will consist of key tourism bodies such as Tourism NI, Visit Belfast, Tourism Ireland and relevant officers from Belfast City Council. This will ensure that the activities developed complement how, for example, Belfast goes to market and will help all parts of the city to benefit from the projected growth in tourism in the coming years.

**Mechanisms for delivery**

- 3.7** Officers are currently compiling a baseline of the local tourism infrastructure across the City. This will cover not only the facilities (hotels, restaurants, visitor attractions, tours etc.) but also the level of investment in skills (e.g. World Host) and planned infrastructure investment (new hotels, new visitor experiences such as St Comgall's and Connswater Greenway (both supported by Belfast City Council). Taking account of the likely business growth in tourism and hospitality in the coming years, Officers will work with local tourism organisations to build capacity to ensure that these areas can benefit from the growth and maximise the economic return all across Belfast.
- 3.8** Following engagement with a number of organisations as part of the planning and development work, it is proposed that the first stage of activity will be to work with partners in east and west Belfast. Both have dedicated organisations working to support local tourism (Eastside Visitor Centre and Fáilte Feirste Thiar) and this will be important in acting as a focal point for the programme activity. Both East and West Belfast festivals, cultural organisations and tourism organisations have developed a positive and practical working relationship and have built momentum for future engagement and activity. They have developed initiatives collectively that have had positive outcomes in growing visitor numbers, enhancing product and brand awareness and securing further investment. This proposal, therefore, is to pilot a programme of support this year that will build on the work already undertaken specifically in these areas and to use this as a model of working to support the development and implementation of local tourism frameworks in other parts of the city.
- 3.9** In parallel with the dedicated programme of work in East and West Belfast, Council Officers will engage with relevant local tourism organisations in other parts of the City to see how the local tourism initiatives can be developed in these locations and will bring forward relevant initiatives in conjunction with these organisations, and in line with the broader objectives of this programme.
- 3.10** While the final details of the programme are still under development, it is likely to comprise the following elements:

- **Establishment of a local tourism stakeholder forum**  
The development of a localised stakeholder forum who will oversee the delivery of the programme and will include participation from Visit Belfast, Tourism NI and Belfast City Council. This forum will support and develop community-led tourism with Belfast's statutory tourism bodies and will work with local communities to build capacity and develop new investment in key areas.
- **Investment in local staff resources**  
For this initiative to be meaningful in its implementation, partners have identified the need for dedicated resources. It is proposed that this approach is tested out in the east and west of the City in order to evaluate how this can drive the sectoral development activities. Council Officers from the Tourism Development team will work closely with the local staff to ensure alignment with wider Council and Tourism NI activity and to share lessons across other local areas.
- **Capacity Building**  
A series of masterclasses/workshops will be delivered that will be needs-led and build the capacity of local organisations and businesses. A number of businesses will also be targeted to avail of programmes such as the World Host accredited training, sales and marketing training and other relevant programmes. This will ensure that the businesses receive the necessary training to become recognised in supplying the highest levels of customer service.
- **Employability opportunities**  
Additionally, the programme will examine the potential for the delivery of localised hospitality recruitment programmes. This area of work will be delivered in liaison with the Council's Employability and Skills team. Partners will engage with local schools to raise awareness of the career opportunities provided by the tourism industry.
- **Marketing**  
This element of work will consider how the narrative of Belfast's story could redefine the city in its marketing and brand positioning efforts in partnership with Visit Belfast and Tourism NI from the Visitor servicing perspective.

3.11 The programme will be expected to deliver on a series of agreed outcomes and targets. These will align to Belfast Agenda targets and will include:

- Increase in jobs
- Improvement in skills
- Additional visitor spend
- Increase in overnight stays.

3.12 Members will be aware that Belfast City Council, in conjunction with Derry City and Strabane District Council, has agreed to submit a joint bid for European Capital of Culture (ECoC) in 2023. Lessons learned from previous Cities of Culture have shown the importance of developing a sustainable investment programme to underpin the viability of the ECoC designation – not only for the year but also in the run-up and after the event. They also point to the potentially significant return on investment and there are numerous examples of how local communities have benefitted from investment both in terms of jobs created but also in terms of civic pride and engagement. By this early investment in local tourism support, there is an opportunity to secure buy-in and build capacity as part of the development phase of the bid.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

3.13 Activities identified will be resourced from the agreed Departmental budget allocations for the current financial year. These have already been approved by the Committee as part of the estimates process.

3.14 The total budget available for this programme is £130,000 of which £80,000 will be allocated specifically towards the activities in east and west Belfast. The remaining budget will support wider interventions that Belfast City Council and Tourism NI will deliver to support local tourism across all of the City.

#### Equality or Good Relations Implications

3.15 The Tourism Strategy was screened out and any major projects will be taken forward in consultation with the Council's Equality and Diversity Officer."

During discussion, the Director added that he, along with the Directors of City and Neighbourhood Services and of Property and Projects, had met earlier that day with the National Trust to discuss areas where the Council and the Trust could work together, such as with Divis and the Black Mountain.

The Committee adopted the recommendations within the report.

### **Routes Europe - Post Event Review**

The Committee noted a report which outlined the success of the Routes Europe Conference which had been held in the Belfast Waterfront between 22nd and 25th April, 2017. The information provided was from Invest NI's first Post Project Review.

The Director of Development reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 12th October 2016, it had agreed to commit £100,000 to support the costs of hosting the Routes Europe conference at the Belfast Waterfront. He advised the Committee that Routes Europe had indicated a number of benefits to the host city included positive PR coverage, potential new airline routes and additional leisure and business tourism visitors.

The Committee was advised of the other key partners which had contributed to the conference, including Invest NI, Tourism NI, the two local airports, Tourism Ireland, Visit Belfast, the Department of the Economy and Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. and noted that all partners had also made in-kind contributions towards the success of the event.

The Director outlined a number of key deliverables from the conference, which included:

- 1,160 delegates, including 114 airlines, 270 airports and 36 tourism authorities;
- 140 delegate tours;
- 750 attendees at the City Hall Welcome Reception;
- 1,000 attendees at the Titanic Gala Networking Events;
- 101 pieces of press coverage; and
- eight new routes announced during the conference, from Belfast to Naples, Madeira, Almeria, Antalya, Crete, Malta, Rhodes and Paphos, which in turn had created 50 new jobs.

The Director explained that both local airports had advised officers that, as a result of the conference, doors were now much more open than they were before and that they expected additional business routes to be announced throughout the coming months.

He outlined to the Members the results from the Post-Event Delegates survey, which had shown that delegates had rated the event with the highest rating that a Routes Europe event had ever received. The Committee was advised that both the Welcome Reception and the Networking Events had been rated as market leading in the conference and exhibition industry and that the organisers had asked to use Belfast as an exemplar case study of how to deliver a successful Routes Europe Conference.

The Director also highlighted that 83% of delegates had stated that their perceptions of Belfast were more positive than before, with 52% having said that they saw opportunities for their organisation in the city.

The Committee noted the update which had been provided.

**Operational**

**Belfast Bikes - Progress Report**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the recent workshop held on the 21st June 2017.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Agree on the actions contained in the report; and**
- **Note that a further report will be presented to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in September 2017.**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 In May 2017 Members agreed to participate in a workshop which was scheduled for June 2017. This workshop was held to inform the Strategic Review of the Belfast Bikes which is currently being carried out.**

**3.2 As part of the Strategic Review the discussions with Members were categorised as follows:**

- **To revisit the original rationale and aims and objectives for the scheme**
- **To provide an update on the scheme to date**
- **To discuss the highlights and challenges**
- **To discuss and agree the way forward**

**3.3 Members were provided with an update of the scheme to date and the benefits achieved thus far. These included:**

- **Steadily increasing membership both Annual and Casual**
- **Increased number of cyclists**
- **Increased support of tourism events**
- **Improved activity levels**
- **Increased level of investment in cycling (leveraged funding)**
- **Improved connectivity in the City Centre**

- Additional choice of mode of transport
- Affordability for short distance trips
- Increased number of tourists cycling
- Improved city green credentials
- Improved image of Belfast

3.4 Members were also provided with information regarding the scheme coverage and current usage patterns.

3.5 Key Issues Identified

The key issues identified by Members were in relation to the following areas:

- Cost of scheme
- Pricing policy
- Coverage and potential expansion
- Vandalism and theft

Cost of the Scheme

3.6 Whilst Members acknowledged that the key outcomes of the implementation of a Bike Scheme in Belfast were not predicated on cost and that the other Benefits in relation to Health and Wellbeing were still relevant, there are concerns that the investment by the Council is substantially higher than the predicted level.

Pricing Policy

3.7 Members questioned the pricing policy and a discussion was had in relation to examining the current pricing structure and membership options. Members requested that options were brought back to Committee in respect of pricing, benchmarking with other schemes and options for alternative memberships such as 'Pay as You Go'.

Promotion

3.8 Members acknowledged that the marketing and promotion of Belfast Bikes has been excellent and requested that further efforts were to be examined in the bid to increase membership. It was agreed that this would be looked at and Committee would be provided with options for moving forward.

**Coverage and Expansion of the Scheme**

- 3.9 A detailed discussion took place in respect of the coverage of the scheme and future plans for expansion. It was recognised that some stations experienced low usage and Members asked about the possibility of moving said stations to other key areas. It was discussed how the current system is flexible and that stations could be moved, however there would be a cost to this. It was agreed that costs and implications of moving stations would be examined and brought back to committee, this would include the identification of stations with low usage and suggested locations for relocation.

**Vandalism and Theft**

- 3.10 Members asked what current actions were being taken to curb vandalism and theft and whether the PSNI had made any arrests and the outcomes of this. It was explained that NSL/Council and the PSNI have been working closely together and this has resulted in the development of a Witness Statement template to assist the PSNI in apprehending individuals for vandalism and theft. There have been several referrals to the PPS and Community Resolution Orders have been issued. Other measures are ongoing for example Nextbike have put a development group in place that will further develop and improve the system aiming to make it more secure. The Ipedal pilot project is now live and information will be gathered over the coming months. Members requested that other measures were examined and costed. Again it was agreed that this area would be examined and reported back to Committee. This would include CCTV cameras for problematic stations, engaging with Community groups with Member support, other additional security measures e.g. extra hours for NSL staff to carry out checks and linkages with Community Safety.
- 3.11 In summary the following actions will be taken and a report taken back to Committee in September 2017 for consideration:

| Action  | Output  |
|---|---|
| Review of business case costs and income.         | Provide Members with realistic view of the proposed ongoing investment required by the Council                    |
| Review the pricing policy and membership options. | Provide Members with options and risks in relation to pricing.<br>Provide Members with suggestions in relation to |



|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | membership such as 'Pay as You Go'.   |
| Examine coverage and usage of bikes across the City. | Provide Members with options in respect of relocation of existing stations and costs/implications of moving stations. |
| Examine vandalism and theft interventions.           | Provide Members with information regarding intervention actions and the costs/implications of this.                   |
| Examine further promotional opportunities.           | Provide Members with information regarding future promotion ideas.  |

- 3.12 Members are asked to note the report and agree to this work being progressed with a further report to come back to Committee with options and costs for the suggested improvements and activities.
- 3.13 Whilst not directly linked to the Bike Scheme, Members should be aware that Sustrans have offered funding of £1,547.40 (60% of purchase cost) towards the purchase of a Bicycle Repair Station at the new C.S Lewis Square in east Belfast. The first of its kind in Northern Ireland - this free and publically accessible bike repair facility will comprise of a bicycle pump unit and a unit containing a range of eight retractable tools – to provide cyclists with a free facility to make adjustments and repairs on the spot. The remaining costs associated with equipment purchase, installation and maintenance will be taken forward as part of the Connswater Community Greenway project along which the new square was constructed last year.
- 3.14 The proposal is part of a wider EU funded CHIPS project being take forward by Sustrans to promote cycling on East Belfast's Comber Greenway and includes cycle storage at Belfast Rapid Transport stops within the local area and a further Bike Repair Stations at Billy Neil Soccer Centre in Dundonald.
- 3.15 This proposal will be taken forward for agreement via CCG change control process i.e. Connswater Community Greenway budget will cover costs of installation. The management and maintenance implications/costs will be dealt with in respect of the Parks Service and C&N budgetary process.

**3.16 Financial & Resource Implications**

The costs of the individual elements will be identified as part of the ongoing work on the strategic review. Members will be advised of the financial implications as well as the impact on the current programme budget.

**3.17 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

No specific equality or good relations implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Atlantic Youth Trust**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to:**

- Update Members on plans by the Atlantic Youth Trust to build a sail training vessel to facilitate youth development, mentoring and training on an all-island basis
- Seek Member support to encourage the Northern Ireland Executive to progress the release of the funding to allow the project to move forward.

**2.0 Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the work of the Atlantic Youth Trust (AYT) and the link to some of the Council activity to support major maritime-based events as well as supporting youth engagement and skills development through a Council funded Sail Training Programme.
- Agree to write a letter to Northern Ireland Executive to encourage the release of the funding.

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Key Issues**

The Atlantic Youth Trust is a youth development and cultural integration charity that brings together young people from

Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to engage in sail-based training and development activity.

- 3.2 One of the organisation's key ambitions has been to develop its own Tall Ship that will act as a focal point for the future engagement and training activity. AYT has been engaging in an extensive programme of political outreach and lobbying to secure the necessary funding for the construction of the vessel. At this point in time, they have been able to secure resources from the Republic of Ireland government. These are to be matched by resources from the Northern Ireland Executive.
- 3.3 The Fresh Start Agreement included a commitment to work with the Irish government to 'seek agreement on a funding plan for the Atlantic Youth Trust initiative'. This funding was to focus on the build and fit-out of the training vessel to facilitate youth development, mentoring, and training on an all-island basis.
- 3.4 As part of their fundraising engagement, AYT were able to secure a £20,000 legacy donation from the 2015 Belfast Tall Ships Races – an initiative lead by BCC.
- 3.5 If the project does progress, there are opportunities to link this to a range of additional activities in which the Council is engaged. These include the potential return of the Tall Ships event to Belfast between 2021 and 2023 (subject to funding), youth engagement and outreach activity through our Community Services Team and skills development support. There is also the opportunity to use the vessel to support the city's bid for European Capital of Culture as it would sail to a number of ports across Europe.
- 3.6 Atlantic Youth Trust has asked for Council support to encourage the Northern Ireland Executive to engage to agree the funding plan and necessary match-funding resources to go alongside the resources provided by the Irish government. It is proposed that a letter of support is issued to the Northern Ireland Executive outlining the Council support for this activity and encouraging NI Executive engagement to progress the funding discussions.
- 3.7 Equality and Good Relations Implications

No specific equality or good relations implications at this point.

**3.8 Financial and Resource Implications**

**No specific financial requests at this point.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairperson