

Development Committee

Thursday, 21st February, 2008

Meeting of Development Committee

Members present: Councillor Browne (Chairman); and Councillors Humphrey, Attwood, Campbell, Convery, Crozier, Cunningham, Dodds, Ekin, Hartley, Maskey, McCarthy, Mhic Giolla Mhin and Stoker

In attendance: Ms. M. T. McGivern, Director of Development; Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives; Ms. C. Taggart, Community Services Manager; Mr. T. Husbands, Managing Director, the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls; and Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 16th January were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th February, subject to:

- (i) the omission of the minute under the heading "Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre" which, at the request of Councillor P. Maskey, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration; and
- (ii) the omission of the minute under the heading "Draft Crumlin Road Gaol Masterplan" which, at the request of Councillor C. Maskey, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre

(Mr. C. Quigley, Director of Legal Services, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 16th January under the heading "Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre" which had been taken back by the Chairman at the Council meeting on 4th February at the request of Councillor P. Maskey. An extract of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

"The Director reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 12th December, it had agreed that the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum could surrender its current lease agreement with the Council in respect of Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre and that the facility be leased for a period of twenty-five years to the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group, subject to the Members of the

Committee being provided with further information regarding the membership of the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum, the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group and the Inner South Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership, prior to the Council Meeting on 7th January. However, in the event that information had not been provided. Accordingly, a report, together with various appendices which contained the requested information, had been circulated with the papers for the current meeting.

The Director advised the Committee that, following a decision of the former Client Services Committee, Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre had been leased by the Council to the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum for a period of ten years, commencing in October 2000. The lease agreement had included a sports pitch adjacent to the Centre. She explained that under a Service Level Agreement the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group delivered on behalf of the Forum a programme of activities in response to community needs. She explained further that the Group had been awarded funding of £2.3 million, £1,925,000 of which would be provided by Sport Northern Ireland, to undertake improvements to the Centre, including the upgrading of the sports pitch.

The Director pointed out that a Sport Northern Ireland condition required the lease for Shaftesbury to be held by the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group, since that organisation would be responsible for all the work being undertaken to the facility and for the efficient and effective operation of the Centre. Hence the request from the Forum for permission to transfer the lease for the facility to the Group. In addition, Sport Northern Ireland had indicated that the Group would be required to meet stringent funding requirements regarding openness and accountability.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was

*Moved by Councillor P. Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor Hartley,*

That the Committee affirms its decision of 12th December to transfer the lease for the Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre from the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum to the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group.

On a vote by show of hands five Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Further Proposal

*Moved by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Kelly),
Seconded by Councillor McCarthy,*

That the new Management Committee for the Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre, as required by Sport Northern Ireland's funding condition, be in place prior to the Committee agreeing to transfer the lease in respect of the Centre from the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum to the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group.

On a vote by show of hands four members voted for the proposal and six against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Following further discussion, it was

*Moved by Councillor Convery,
Seconded by Councillor Ekin and*

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to permit the Council to enter into a direct lease arrangement with the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group in respect of Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre, subject to the facility's Management Committee, as required by Sport Northern Ireland, being cross-community, cross-Party and reflective of the population of South Belfast, and to this being in place prior to Sport Northern Ireland releasing its funding. In addition, the Committee agrees, in order to facilitate this arrangement, that the lease dated 20th December, 2000 between the Council and the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum be surrendered coterminously.”

The Committee considered the undernoted report which had been prepared by the Director of Legal Services:

“Relevant Background Information”

Shaftesbury Recreation Centre has been leased by the Council to the Lower Ormeau and Markets Community Forum (LOMCF) for a period of ten years from 1st October 2000. The Lease Agreement includes an external sports pitch adjacent to the Centre.

A Service Level Agreement forms the basis of a contract between LOMCF and the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) under which LOMCF grants LORAG use of Shaftesbury to deliver a programme of activities in response to local community needs ensuring a broad base of activities and opportunities for each age group.

LORAG have progressed an application with Sport NI (SNI) which will see an investment of £2.3 million which includes a sports and health facility and upgrade of the sports pitch to a third generation pitch.

- The Development Committee at its meeting on 16 January 2008 considered a request from LOMCF that a Lease is granted directly from the Council to LORAG. Additional information relating to the request was provided in relation to LORAG'S governance/management arrangements. The Committee agreed to permit the Council to enter into a direct lease arrangement with LORAG in respect of Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre, subject to 'the facility's management Committee, as required by SNI being cross- community, cross-Party and reflective of the population of South Belfast, and to this being in place prior to SNI releasing its funding'. In addition, the Committee agreed, in order to facilitate this arrangement, that the Lease dated 20 December 2000 between the Council and LOMCF be surrendered, co-terminously.
- At the February Council meeting (4 February 2008) it was agreed that the Minute under the heading 'Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre' be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

Current position

SNI as a result of legal advice have indicated its preference that a lease be granted directly to LORAG from Council as LORAG is the funding applicant and will be the body responsible for implementation of the scheme.

The Directors of Development and Legal Services met with representatives of SNI in order to clarify its requirements in relation to its offer of grant support, the current status of the offer and any specific conditions of offer.

The current position can be confirmed as follows:-

- SNI have a five stage process of assessment which is as follows:
 - (i) submission of Outline Proposal
 - (ii) formalising the Business Plan
 - (iii) Design and Tender Process
 - (iv) Construction
 - (v) Monitoring and evaluation.

- The Shaftesbury proposal is at stage 2 with an indicative time scale of SNI Board consideration in May 2008
- The finalised Business Plan will address any outstanding issues such as total project cost and funding deficit, governance arrangements etc
- SNI confirmed that subsequent to a positive consideration of the Business Plan SNI would develop a formal letter of offer which would set out the conditions of funding and monitoring arrangements. This will include the establishment of a facility development sub-committee of the LORAG Board populated by representatives of strategic stake holders, user groups and the local community.
- The Council also requires both the LORAG Board and the facility development sub-committee to demonstrate that they are reflective of the local community.
- Both SNI and the Council confirmed that any contract for funding and/or any lease agreement would as a matter of course contain the appropriate user clauses such as a Section 75 clause and a community user clause.
- SNI indicated in the course of the meeting with the Directors of Development and Legal Services that the previous deadline (February 2008) for execution of a Lease had now been extended. SNI outlined an indicative revised deadline of May 2008.

The Director of Legal Services had a meeting with representatives of LORAG at which it was confirmed that it is LORAG's intention to establish a facility development sub-committee to include user groups, stake holders and the local community.

LORAG were informed that Council will secure its interests in the proposed lease which will include the following conditions;

1. The lease will be subject to confirmation of SNI funding, together with any additional funding required to make the project viable.
2. The facility must be used in accordance with article 10 of the Recreation and Youth Services (NI) Order 1986 for recreational, social, physical and cultural purposes and for the purposes of serving the needs of the local community in that regard without distinction.
3. A facility development sub-committee be established.

4. That Council will have the right to nominate members/observers to the facility development sub-committee in accordance with any Council policy in place from time to time in relation to community facilities generally in respect of which Council makes funding available.

Key Issues

The Key issues for the Committee to consider are;

1. There is now a revised timescale for execution of the Lease.
2. The actual conditions of SNI are that a facility development sub-committee is established representative of User groups as outlined in the Business Plan.
3. To note the position as stated in relation to funding requirements of SNI.
4. Whether the Council should now proceed to grant a lease to LORAG in accordance with the various conditions recommended by the Director of Legal Services.

Resource Implications

Financial

There are no capital cost implications. Council will be responsible for the insurance and maintenance of a larger building. Although this will result in some modest cost to the Council, the proposed development will increase the value of a Council owned building.

Human Resources

No human resource implications.

Recommendations

Members are requested to note the contents of this report and approve the grant of a Lease from the Council to LORAG subject to the conditions set out in this report and a suitable legal agreement being entered into.

Key to Abbreviations

- LOMCF – Lower Ormeau Markets and Community Forum
LORAG – Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group
SNI – Sport Northern Ireland”

The Director of Legal Services pointed out that, since the proposal regarding the Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre was currently only at Stage II of Sport Northern Ireland's assessment process, that organisation was not in a position to indicate formally that grant assistance would be provided to the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group regarding the scheme. He informed the Members that he and the Director of Development had met with representatives of both organisations and had ascertained that Sport Northern Ireland would require the Action Group to establish a stakeholder forum, which must be representative of the user groups, to run the facility on a day-to-day basis. He pointed out that the Group had been informed that, since Shaftesbury was owned by the Council, it was entitled to place certain covenants within the lease which would be required to be drawn up.

During a lengthy discussion in the matter, several Members expressed concern that the lease being requested by the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group was for a longer period of time than other such agreements and, therefore, the Council was not being consistent in the manner in which it dealt with such requests. Other Members expressed the view that the Group, within two years of the existing lease being due to expire, had applied for funding to improve a facility which it did not own, thereby placing the Council in an invidious position. It was pointed out that the Council was examining currently the Facility Management Agreements which were in place regarding a number of Council properties and it was suggested that the request regarding Shaftesbury be not considered until the Council had established a Policy on such Agreements. Several Members enquired as to whether leasees were required to adhere to various Policies which the Council had in place regarding such issues as health and safety, signage and child protection.

In response to these remarks, the Director of Legal Services indicated that the Council had entered into a number of 25 year leases and one 99 year lease on facilities. He assured the Members that the Council, as a matter of course, would insert appropriate conditions on all its leases regarding statutory requirements. He reminded the Committee that the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group had indicated that it would be establishing a Facility Development Sub-Committee, on which the Council would be represented.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Crozier,
Seconded by Councillor Campbell,

That the Committee defers consideration of the request from the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group regarding Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre to allow for a report to be submitted to the Committee at the earliest opportunity on the development of an overall policy on such agreements where the Council has passed responsibility for the management of facilities to a third party.

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

Further Proposal

Moved by Councillor Stoker,
Seconded by Councillor Ekin,

That the Committee agrees to enter into a direct lease arrangement with the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group in respect of Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre, subject to:

- (i) confirmation being received that funding has been received from Sport Northern Ireland, together with any additional funding which is required to make the project viable;
- (ii) the facility being used in accordance with Article 10 of the Recreation and Youth Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 for recreational, social, physical and cultural purposes and for purposes which serve the needs of the local community in that regard without distinction;
- (iii) a cross-community Facility Development Sub-Committee being established;
- (iv) the Council having the right to nominate Members or officers to the Facility Development Sub-Committee in accordance with any Council Policy which is in place from time to time in relation to community facilities generally and in respect of which the Council has provided funding;
- (v) the agreement between the Action Group and the Council requiring the Group to adhere to all statutory requirements and Council Policies covering child protection and good governance; and
- (vi) the agreement being used as a basis for the development of an overall policy for any future Facility Management Agreements.

On a vote by show of hands five Members voted for the proposal and nine against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Following further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor C. Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor Mhic Giolla Mhín,

That the Committee agrees to enter into a direct lease arrangement with the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group in respect of Shaftesbury Community/Recreation Centre, subject to:

- (i) confirmation being received that funding has been received from Sport Northern Ireland, together with any additional funding which is required to make the project viable;

- (ii) the facility being used in accordance with Article 10 of the Recreational and Youth Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 for recreational, social, physical and cultural purposes and for purposes which serve the needs of the local community in that regard without distinction;
- (iii) a Facility Development Sub-Committee being established; and
- (iv) the Council having the right to nominate Members or officers to the Facility Development Sub-Committee in accordance with any Council Policy which is in place from time to time in relation to community facilities generally and in respect of which the Council has provided funding.

On a vote by show of hands five Members voted for the proposal and five against. There being an equality of votes, the Chairman (Councillor M. Browne) exercised his second and casting vote in favour of the proposal, which was accordingly declared carried.

Draft Crumlin Road Gaol Masterplan

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 16th January under the heading "Draft Crumlin Road Gaol Masterplan" which had been taken back by the Chairman at the Council meeting on 4th February at the request of Councillor C. Maskey. An extract of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

"The Committee considered a report and a proposed response from the Council regarding the draft masterplan for the Crumlin Road Gaol/Girdwood Park site in North Belfast.

The Committee agreed that the undernoted comments be submitted as the Council's official response to the Draft Crumlin Road Gaol Masterplan Consultation Exercise, subject to it being amended to indicate that the Council acknowledges that the Advisory Panel could not reach a final decision on the housing issue:

'Introduction'

1.1 Belfast City Council welcomes this ambitious proposal. For a long time the Crumlin Road Gaol has been a derelict site located in a contentious community area. In general the plan brings a significant opportunity for balancing development and regeneration across the city; given the ongoing development in the East of the City at Titanic Quarter and the Sirocco Quays concept Masterplan.

- 1.2 *Our general comment would be at the lack of detail of the drawings in the documents. Overall the drawings do not seem to offer enough detail to comment on, especially the ones illustrating the whole site. Layout of some proposed spaces and buildings have been detailed in the main document, some areas omitted.*
- 1.3 *The Council is currently targeting regeneration efforts along Belfast's arterial routes. The Crumlin Road is one of the priority routes identified as requiring targeted regeneration and therefore we are very supportive of the development of the Gaol site.*
- 1.4 *A significant proportion of the draft Masterplan has been based around UK best practice case studies, which the Council strongly supports. We would also recommend to DSD to look at the development of Oxford Castle project that received Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Project of the Year Award 2007.*
- 1.5 *In terms of more specific comments we have shaped our response around the sustainable communities concept. The Sustainable Communities agenda has become pertinent to Belfast as we are all working towards the common goal of creating "Places where people want to live and work now and in the future".*

This means:

- *Balancing and integrating social, economic and environmental components of their community;*
- *Meeting the needs of existing and future generations;*
- *Recognising the cross cutting nature of issues affecting communities;*
- *Working in a coordinated way with a wide range of interests and organisations;*
- *Respecting the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally; and*
- *Recognising that sustainable communities are diverse and reflect their local circumstances. There is no standard template to fit them all.*

- 1.6 *In the last six months the Council has been devising the Community Support Plan for Belfast for which it had to gather evidence on needs in Belfast. The Council focused on Belfast's four parliamentary constituencies. This response is based around the "eight categories" and needs that the Council has found exist in North Belfast.*

2. Leadership & Governance

- 2.1** *North Belfast needs support to strengthen its community capacity and infrastructure, which this regeneration plan for Crumlin Road will significantly help. However, the Council believes that this project could do a lot more to increase community capacity in the area by, for example, encouraging social enterprise and cultural tourism.*
- 2.2** *A particular concern is that the focus of the regeneration is not concentrated on the frontage of the Crumlin Road, as we feel it is here where all communities can benefit most and a successful proposal developed. The masterplan moves the focus of the site away from the Crumlin Road to the rear of the gaol site which:*
- Compromises the Crumlin Road frontage as the arterial route/main street**
 - Undermines the strength of the Courthouse & Crumlin Gaol as focal point.**
- 2.3** *Currently the plan suggests to place the “heartspace” to the rear of the Gaol and to the internal area of development which:*
- Reinforces the internalisation of communities. We believe that focusing on the centre on the Crumlin Road would help create a focus to draw communities out.**
 - Could potentially have risks as anti-social behaviour and interface issues could be problematic without the surveillance of passing traffic and footfall especially at night.**
- 2.4** *Thus the Council would suggest that the Masterplan provides a greater balance between outwards and inwards orientation.*

3. Transport & Connectivity

- 3.1** *It is crucial to improve the connectivity of North Belfast with other neighbourhoods in the city. The Masterplan does place a lot of emphasis on transport, but the Council’s concern is too much emphasis on car parks and car uses. In order to support the concept of “safe space” & “shared space” consideration needs to be given to good public transport links in addition to car access.*

3.2 *The creation of a major junction could seem an unnecessary use of land as the existing junction with minor re-design could accommodate site traffic. The new junction would further erode the road frontage. The development of buildings is preferable with the retention of the existing street frontage in order to strengthen the urban form.*

4. **Services**

4.1 *Improving access to services and more open spaces are very important in North Belfast. The Masterplan does seem to incorporate the needs of different age groups.*

4.2 *The Council has recently commissioned Deloitte to undertake research on “Accessing services in a divided City” under its Conflict Transformation Project. In relation to developing “safe space” & “shared space” it would be useful for the Masterplan to take into account findings from this research which will be available early next year.*

5. **Environmental**

5.1 *A lot more needs to be done to improve the health and well being of the people in North Belfast. While the creation of a health centre on the site is very positive, the Council would suggest a detailed Health Impact Assessment to be undertaken.*

5.2 *A comprehensive Health Impact Assessment of the Lower Shankill was commissioned by the NIHE. The assessment recognises the importance of the Masterplanning process for Crumlin Road Gaol site and recommends that there should be liaison to identify and exploit synergies between various strategies in the area. Although the draft Masterplan does acknowledge the need to consider the impact on the wider regeneration of North Belfast, Lower Oldpark and Lower Shankill, the Council recommends that a detailed HIA of any proposals for the development of the Masterplan area should be carried out, and aligned with others.*

5.3 In the era of global warming and climate change, the Council believes that any future regeneration project needs to incorporate renewable energy solutions depending on feasibility. This site could be a great candidate for photovoltaics, solar water heating systems and the use of biomass boilers for heating. We think that considering the ambitious Government targets

- **to achieve 12% of electricity to come from renewable energy by 2012 and**
- **reduce carbon emission by 50% below 1990's level by 2050**

DSD needs to consider further these options.

5.4 The Council would strongly advise any developer, planner or architect working on the implementation of the Masterplan proposals to:

- **Discuss the need for appropriate waste and recycling storage with the Council; and**
- **Follows the advice contained in the Council's publication "Waste and Recycling Storage Requirements, a guide for developers, architects and building contractors".**

6. Social inclusion

6.1 It is vital to address interface issues in North Belfast and reduce the number of people living in deprivation.

6.2 Integration of local communities is paramount in this process particularly given the fractious nature of North Belfast. While the proposals mention the "Shared Future" at the beginning the draft Masterplan does not really demonstrate how it will integrate the principles of a Shared Future in order to ensure that public space is created that can be accessed by all the community.

6.3 The Council supports the proposals to undertake further consultations about the plans but this should not be a one time deal. On-going consultation will be critical to the development of this site and can help to ensure local community integration into the process.

6.4 This regeneration project needs to take a broader community significance and focus firstly on the needs of local communities and then on the need of Belfast.

6.5 *Community safety needs to be considered as anti-social behaviour especially at night may become an issue that can undermine wider promotion and use of the site.*

7. Economy

7.1 *It is essential that local people are linked to the opportunities that will avail from the site's development eg. job opportunities. Having in mind the nature of long term unemployment within the area, Local Employment Initiatives should be provided to connect local people to the jobs on site. This can also link in with the learning and skills proposals that DSD has for the site.*

7.2 *It is very positive that the development will encourage social economy enterprises, but the Council would strongly encourage support of LOCAL social economy enterprises which will not only help economic inclusion on the area but also increased community capacity.*

7.3 *The document includes very limited elaboration on proposals for economic development activity on this site. The Council feels that, given the difficulties of this site, economic development activity would provide an appropriate "buffer zone" and a neutral use. As Belfast in general lacks quality business facilities, we would suggest a stronger emphasis on developing some on the site, both industry hubs (such as creative or knowledge industries) and incubation to link education facilities and employment opportunities.*

7.4 *We welcome the proposal for creative workplaces and note that this will fill the gap created by proposals for Brookfield Mill which might not proceed.*

8. Infrastructure & Physical

8.1 *We welcome proposals to support sustainability in site development and note that Belfast City Council is developing best practice in such methods through its North Foreshore site and also through its BERI network (Brownfields Europe Regeneration Initiative).*

Character

8.2 *This project poses quite a challenge having in mind design in a sensitive historic environment and difficult community situation. Connection to the local community needs to be achieved through culture connections to the past, as well as connections and use.*

Functions

8.3 Functions of different spaces and venues need to be rigorously accessed, both day time and night time use, formal and informal and different user groups. It needs to be considered:

- *night time space/ public road/interface concerns – there may be risk of creating a “dead” and unsafe place*
- *how is the public realm integrated into different uses*
- *lack of activity in the central area with no purposeful function could compromise public realm*

Leisure

8.4 The Masterplan correctly points out that the Council has agreed that the Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Barracks is its preferred location for a Leisure Centre in the North of the City.

8.5 The Masterplan outlines the need to ensure that in relation to the proposed leisure and recreational facilities that where possible the emphasis needs to be on developing multi use facilities that will meet the requirements of the Council, St Malachy's College, other local schools and the wider community need and we would fully endorse this thinking.

8.6 The Masterplan proposals for the Leisure Centre include concept facilities to be included in the Leisure Centre and surrounding outdoor sports pitches. We would stress that our normal practice in developing new leisure facilities within Council is that we would commission an independent consultation exercise with the local community to identify and get support for the type of facilities they wish to see included in any proposed facilities. At this stage this exercise has not been undertaken and it is only when this has been completed that we will be in a position to specify our exact requirements for the proposed facility.

8.7 In addition to this, more recently when developing new leisure facilities the Council has been keen to explore opportunities for partnership working across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The recent Grove Health & Wellbeing facility developed in partnership with Social Services and the Education Board is a prime example of the type of opportunity that

the Council wants to explore fully. In developing the Leisure Centre on the Crumlin Road & Girdwood site in addition to the opportunities for partnership working with both the Mater Hospital and St Malachy's School we would also require the flexibility to further explore other potential partnership arrangements before agreeing our final plans for the site.

- 8.8 *In relation to the proposals for children's play areas and open space within the site while we welcome the fact that these have been included in the Masterplan, as stated above in relation to providing leisure facilities it will also be important to engage in a wider consultation exercise with the local community before finalising any proposals for play areas and open space within the site.*

Design

- 8.9 *We would strongly suggest the Crumlin Road frontage should be at the forefront of this development – it should provide a sense of continuity for the whole road. Linkages should concentrate on the Gaol's Crumlin Road frontage and Courthouse as a package. Whole project should be phased from this point backwards into adjacent communities.*
- 8.10 *We understood that the future of the Court House was to be included in the proposals. Historically it was very much associated with the Gaol, including an underground tunnel between the two, and it is difficult to understand why there is no reference to it in the draft plan. It appears on the map of the area in the document which gives the impression that it is part of the Masterplan area.*
- 8.11 *The suggestion ARC road is a strong structuring element but it seems that its purpose is dominated by vehicular use within the site, will this be well integrated into the community and will it be used as a street or will it look more like an entrance to a business park? Access by other routes should be feasible- ARC not the only option.*

Housing development

- 8.12 *We recognise that housing development will be very important issue on the site. We feel that any proposals need to be flexible and more work needs to be done with communities in line with the "Shared Future" agenda.*

Public Realm

- 8.13 *The area of public realm at the “heartspace” is large and it seems that no frontage is created along the ARC route. The public realm is weakened by a lack of frontage, where public space lies on both sides on the main pedestrian route and the suggested tree closure/landscaping looks insufficient to produce enclosure.*
- 8.14 *The quality of the public realm and landscape is unclear from the document. The mass and scale of the public realm may in reality be hard to fill monotonous areas of deserted space.*
- 8.15 *The relationship between spaces and the buildings seems unclear. Little consideration is given to the character of the spaces – we are unconvinced that the proposed public realm is robust enough to support the development of this scale and we have a query over what the main public benefit will be.*

9. Social and Cultural

- 9.1 *As this development encompasses combining historic with modern, local community and wider strategic uses, it is essential to build its special Identity combining character and heritage. It would also be beneficial to develop overall branding of the place in order to attract wider city and out of Belfast audience.*
- 9.2 *The Crumlin Road Gaol site provides an excellent opportunity for the development of tourism initiatives on the site. We would recommend the tourism benefits could be further enhanced through the provision of a visitor attraction on the site which could be an excellent catalyst for generating new tourism business with associated infrastructure services, e.g. retail and cafe facilities.*
- 9.2 *The place could be a cultural capital of North Belfast with a range of events, festivals and, as suggested by the Masterplan, cultural quarters, museum and gallery. Also, the emphasis should be placed on cultural tourism, in which the Council already holds a significant experience. Local pride in the area needs to be nurtured from the outset.’ ”*

The Director of Development informed the Committee that Councillor C. Maskey had requested that the matter be taken back in order to ascertain whether an Equality Impact Assessment of the Masterplan had been undertaken. She informed the Committee that the Department for Social Development had indicated that, given the conceptual nature of the Draft Masterplan and since the proposals were only illustrative of the potential usage of the site, it had been considered unnecessary to undertake such an Assessment at this stage.

During discussion in the matter, several Members made the point that it would be a legal requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment to be undertaken when the final version of the Masterplan was being prepared. Accordingly, the Committee agreed to adhere to its decision of 16th January regarding the Draft Crumlin Road Gaol Masterplan, subject to the Council's response being amended to include a reference to the requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment of the Masterplan to be undertaken.

Date of March Meeting

The Committee Administrator reminded the Committee that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, together with the Director and the Head of Economic Initiatives, would be travelling to the South by South West Festival in Austin, Texas to showcase the talent and creativity of a number of groups from Belfast and to undertake a visit to the Council's Sister City of Nashville. The Lord Mayor and the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure would also be participating in the trip. Since the monthly meeting of the Committee in March was scheduled to be held whilst the party would be in America, the Chairman had agreed that the meeting would be held on Friday, 7th March, commencing at 10.00 a.m.

Noted.

Departmental Plan Update

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided information on the current status of projects, initiatives and events being carried out by the Department.

State of the City Conference

The Director reminded the Committee that, in recent years as part of the Belfast State of the City Initiative, an annual Conference had been held. Proposals to hold the next such event on 20th May in the Belfast Waterfront Hall had been included as part of the Departmental Plan which had been approved by the Committee at its meeting on 8th August, 2007. The event would focus on the economic development research which had been carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on behalf of the Council. Accordingly, she sought the Committee's approval for the holding of the Conference.

After discussion, the Committee approved the theme of the State of the City V Conference, noted that a budget of £25,000 had been allocated in respect thereof and agreed that any Member of the Council who so wished be authorised to attend the Conference.

Quartiers en Crise

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

This report deals with the transfer of the Quartiers en Crise network from the Belfast Trust to Belfast City Council.

Quartiers en Crise

Quartiers en Crise (Neighbourhoods in Crisis) was established as a European cities network in 1989. Under the leadership of the then North and West Health Trust, Belfast was one of the ten founding members. The network was set up to:

- Promote integrated approaches to urban regeneration and local residents' involvement in that process
- Develop programmes and projects which facilitate the exchange of experience and practice
- Support initiatives based on greater participation of target groups
- Promote joined up working and thinking between local authorities and other key agencies, especially local communities and NGOS
- Undertake research and evaluation in order to impact on existing and future urban regeneration policies/programmes
- Represent the views and needs of disadvantaged areas/groups within EU and EU groupings and networks
- Create a network which constitutes a European 'think tank' regarding the issues of diversity, integration, social and economic exclusion and urban regeneration

The strength of the network has always been its three pillared approach involving elected members, officials and local residents in influencing policy and project delivery on the ground.

The normal approach to membership of Quartiers en Crise is that the city municipality takes the lead, as the city is the member.

In Belfast however, this function has historically been undertaken by the Belfast Health Trust although the success of QEC in Belfast has been a multi agency approach. Belfast City Council has been active in the network through officer engagement and elected member activity. The current Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Kelly participated in the recent AGM held in Italy in November 07.

The Quartiers en Crise headquarters in Brussels has a team of 11 led by a Director and managed by an Executive Bureau. The Executive Bureau meets four times a year and ensures the implementation of the membership programme as agreed by the General Assembly.

Executive Bureau members are usually officers acting by proxy for the leading politician in each city with a remit for European affairs, in Belfast that is the Council's Chair of The Development Committee.

At a local level each city stakeholder contributes an annual subscription of £2,500, which totals £20,000 or approximately €25,500. From this subscription, €7,800 is paid to the Brussels secretariat as a membership fee and contribution to the staff and running costs of the Brussels office. The balance is used to cover the costs of the Belfast Co-ordinator, travel costs for attendance at meetings and match funding, where possible, for new projects for Belfast.

Each city has a local Quartiers en Crise structured membership with Belfast's as follows:

- Belfast Health Trust
- Belfast City Council
- NI Housing Executive
- Department of Education & Learning
- Belfast Education & Library Board
- Belfast Regeneration Office
- Arts Council
- Probation Board
- Belfast Area Partnership Boards

The benefits of Belfast City Council involvement in Quartiers en Crise include:

- The creation of a local forum for the Chief Executives of key city stakeholder organisations in Belfast
- Early access to information on European policies and funding opportunities
- Funded projects

- Opportunities for staff and community representatives to learn from other projects in Europe
- Opportunities to promote Belfast in Europe
- Access to and opportunities to contribute to best practice in Europe in integrated approaches to urban regeneration
- Opportunities to promote and showcase Belfast best practice in Europe, including citizen involvement
- Getting involved in EU 'think tank' regarding issues of diversity, integration, social and economic exclusion and urban regeneration.

Projects that have been accessed via Quartiers en Crise for Belfast involvement include 2 Interreg projects, an Equal initiative, ReStart education programme, Latent Potential initiative as well as the Urbact Programme.

Key Issues

Proposed way forward

Since the rationalisation of the Health Trusts in Belfast there has been a re-focus of external activity. Although remaining fully and actively committed to Quartiers en Crise, the Belfast Health Trust no longer wishes to retain the position of local co-ordinator and driver of Quartiers en Crise, Belfast. The constituent members of Quartiers en Crise Belfast have collectively requested that the management and delivery of Quartiers en Crise is transferred to Belfast City Council.

In practice this would mean that Belfast City Council, through the Development Department's European Unit, would assume responsibility for the coordination of Quartiers en Crise bi-monthly meetings, oversee the development of new project activity, manage the annual subscription to Quartiers en Crise and manage the local Belfast budget. This local budget would cover administrative support, and the workload of Quartiers en Crise Belfast would be subsumed within the EU Unit. The local Belfast QEC Group would continue to nominate the Belfast Chair and nominate the representative to the Executive Bureau in Brussels.

Currently Belfast's membership includes holding the position of Treasurer of the network. Positions on the Executive Bureau are elected every two years and it is the intention of the Belfast group to seek re-election next year. The Bureau meets quarterly and there is an Annual General Meeting. All expenses related to attendance at the Executive Bureau are paid for centrally.

If Belfast retains the role of Treasurer, the representatives will also have meetings with the accountant, usually alongside the Executive Bureau.

The role of the Executive Bureau is to oversee and approve the work of the network, to represent the network in meetings with significant Commission representatives, and to ensure sound financial management.

If Belfast is not represented in the Executive Bureau, then its participation is reduced to project participation rather than having an overall view of the workings of the network.

Belfast is not guaranteed an elected position on the Executive Bureau but could go forward to seek this if there is a political will.

Benefits to Belfast City Council

Since joining QEC as a founding member in 1989, Belfast City stakeholders have engaged in European projects from a bottom up level.

QEC is a unique network that involves the participation of residents and community stakeholders, elected members and officers. This citizenship involvement in European Union activity is unique and would be lost if QEC Belfast was to disappear.

QEC also provides a local platform of engagement in EU activity at a multi agency level and is the only such vehicle existing in Belfast and the region. It allows BCC officers and Members to engage in EU activity with relevant officers from the member organisations promoting integrated approaches on key priority issues such as governance, housing, health, poverty and urban regeneration.

Resource Implications

Quartiers en Crise

Co-ordination, administration and subscription to the network would be covered by the Belfast members' subscription to Quartiers en Crise. This would be managed through the European Unit and built into its yearly business plan. BCC would manage the local QEC budget of £20,000 plus any income gained from new European project implementation. The direct cost to Council from within the EU unit budget will therefore be £2,500, which is the Council's member contribution to the Belfast budget of £20k.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Approve the transfer of Quartiers en Crise to the management of Belfast City Council
- Approve the 2008 annual subscription fee of £2500

Members will be briefed at a later date on the opportunity to seek a position on the QEC Executive Bureau and resource implications will be considered at this time.

Key to Abbreviations

QEC – Quartiers en Crise

NGO – Non-governmental organisation”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

European Union Training for Councillors

The Director advised the Members that, as result of discussions between the First and the Deputy First Ministers and the European Commission President, a taskforce had been established to create economic growth, innovation and methods of improving Northern Ireland's engagement in Europe. It would, therefore, be important for the Council to expand its knowledge of European Union systems. Accordingly, the European Unit had arranged a training and awareness event for Members and officers to be held on 28th March.

The Committee noted the information provided and authorised the attendance at the European Union training event of any Member of the Council who so wished.

Junior and Cadet Fencing World Championships 2009

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Introduction

In the last ten years, Belfast has built a strong reputation for hosting major events. Prior to 1999, the visit of the Tall Ships was perhaps the one stand out major event to be hosted by the City. However, with the changes in the political climate, the City has had a renaissance in major event management. It began with the World Cross Country Championships in 1999 and gradually bids for major events became more ambitious. The next eight years saw Belfast host many significant major events such as the World Irish Dancing Championships, the World Amateur Boxing Championships, the U19 European football Championships, the Special Olympics Ireland Games, and the U-19 Rugby World Cup.

More recently Belfast City Council has agreed to support the return of the Tall Ships in 2009, the bid to capture the World Transplant Games in 2011, and support the World Police and Firefighter Games 2013, which will be easily the largest event ever to come to Northern Ireland. An approach has now been made by British Fencing and UK Sport to seek funding support from Belfast and the other surrounding local authorities to bring the Junior and Cadet Fencing World Championships to Northern Ireland from 4 to 13 April 2009.

Relevant Background Information

Junior and Cadet Fencing World Championships 2009

The Junior and Cadet World Championships (U20 and U17) are held annually in April and have been in place since the late 1950s. They are run under the auspices of the world governing body, the Federation Internationale d'Escrime (FIE) and are viewed as an important milestone in the elite player pathway, with many athletes seen at these events going on to perform in the Olympics.

Event Specifics

There will be nine days of competition with over 1,000 athletes expected from approximately 85 countries. The venue for the event would be University of Ulster High Performance Centre at Jordanstown. In addition to the athletes, there would be a significant number of officials and family members in attendance. This would result in over 10,000 bednights, the vast majority of which would be in Belfast.

The event is also preceded by a Congress to which all international fencing federations are invited. This is an ideal opportunity for the promotion of Belfast as a city and Northern Ireland as a whole as a potential host of holding and training camps in the lead up to London 2012.

The Core Objectives of hosting the Junior and Cadet World Championships in Belfast in 2009 would be to:

- Increase the profile of Belfast as a first class venue for international sporting events.
- Raise the profile of the region through major sports events within the media and visitor economy and get significant return on investment in the form of economic impact for the region.

- To position Belfast as a potential training camp venue for teams in the lead up to the 2012 Olympics and to capitalise on the political benefits both nationally and internationally from hosting a major sports event, particularly in the lead up to 2012.
- Increase the profile of Fencing in Northern Ireland and the UK, and promote the development of the sport. This includes the development of the fencing organisational infrastructure and workforce including skilled and knowledgeable volunteers, officials and referees
- To develop the expertise and capacity required to host major international and world class fencing events in the UK.

Key Issues

An initial meeting of partners has been held and it is recommended that all funding partners are invited to form an event Management Board to assess funding and strategic event issues.

It is anticipated that this Management Board which will act as a steering group with the following members:

- UK Sport
- British Fencing
- Northern Ireland Fencing Union
- Belfast City Council, Carrickfergus Borough Council, Newtownabbey Borough Council
- University of Ulster Jordanstown
- Event Management company

Financial Information

The working budget for the event and associated development work currently stands at £541,447. Members should note that Belfast is being asked for a larger amount than the surrounding Councils (£45,000) because the City will benefit most from the hosting of this event, even though the sports venue is within Newtownabbey. The University can only accommodate 200, and this will result in Belfast having the lion's share of the economic impact. This will be in the region of £1.1m although the source of this information (using the UK Sport model) has described the figure as conservative.

Recommendation / Decision Required

Members are asked to approve funding of £40,000 towards the hosting of the Junior and Cadet Fencing World Championships in 2009. In addition, approval is sought to host the international congress in the Waterfront Hall Studio at a cost of £5,000.”

In response to Members' questions, the Head of Economic Initiatives indicated that there was sufficient money available within the Department's budget to support the event and that, whilst the Fencing World Championships would be held outside the City boundary, the majority of the economic impact would be within Belfast since that would be where most of the participants would be staying and the Congress, which was associated with the Championships, would be held in the Belfast Waterfront Hall. She reported that both Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey Borough Councils had been requested to provide financial assistance towards the costs associated with the event.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the foregoing report.

Interim Revision of Support for Sport Criteria

The Committee deferred consideration of a report regarding an interim review of the criteria which applied to the Support for Sport scheme to enable briefings to be held for the Party Groupings represented on the Council.

Pricing Policy

The Committee considered a report in respect of the prices which were to be charged for the hire of facilities within the Belfast Waterfront Hall and the various Community Centres during the 2008/2009 financial year and for the Ulster Hall from February 2009 till March 2010, which represented a 3% increase compared to those charged currently.

During discussion in the matter, the Director informed the Members that reports would be submitted to future meetings of the Committee in connection with additional means of generating income from both the Belfast Waterfront and the Ulster Halls.

The Committee agreed to the price increases as outlined in the report, a copy of which is available on Modern.gov and noted the information which had been provided by the Director.

Waterfront Hall Cleaning Contract

The Managing Director of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls advised the Committee that the current cleaning contract for the Waterfront Hall was due to expire on 30th April. Accordingly, he sought approval to undertake a procurement exercise to secure a new cleaning contract for a three-year period, with an option to renew for a further two years. He sought approval also to extend the existing contract until 31st July.

The Committee granted the approvals sought and agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Development, in conjunction with the Chairman, to accept the most advantageous tender received.

Branding Belfast

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information"

To update Development Committee on progress towards developing a brand for Belfast and the proposed roll-out of the new brand.

Key Issues

New Belfast Brand

The process behind the creation of a new brand for Belfast commenced in June 2007 with the appointment of Lloyd Northover, international brand consultants. It was clear at this stage that the formal "Smiley Face" logo developed in 1997 was largely redundant. Many new logos had been developed on an ad hoc basis which had led to multiple messages being given out about Belfast. In an increasingly competitive city market it was agreed that the time had come to renew the Belfast brand.

Visioning Phase

At the crucial 'visioning' stage all the learnings from Primary Research and work sessions were coalesced into 3 options for a vision for Belfast - the basis of the new Brand – that is both inspiring and authentic, rooted in reality but representing people's aspirations for the city. These options were explored in terms of developing a unique proposition for the city, a set of values and qualities associated with it that people think are important and to be preserved/promoted.

The distinctiveness, value, credibility and sustainability of these options (for all audiences) were tested through further interviews, steering group and reference group sessions, a Belfast City Councillor briefing session and wider reaching activities including a web based survey and a programme of research for external audiences (from visitor and investor markets). The following proposition is the distillation of the central message which will be conveyed through the brand.

Proposition

A unique history and a future full of promise have come together to create a city bursting with energy and optimism. This is Belfast's moment.

The time is right for us to create a thriving, vibrant city. Bringing together our strong sense of identity, our resilience and enterprise, and our renowned warmth and wit, we are seizing this opportunity with both hands. Proud of our heritage, we embrace the future to build an even better Belfast, providing a warm welcome for visitors, an attractive, exciting environment for investors and a great place to live.

This is the core message for the brand, the foundation and framework for further development.

Creative Development Phase

This is the current phase in the brand process its main purpose being to create the visuals for future campaigns. Options for the creative visual and verbal expression of the brand will be explored and tested in further presentations and work sessions including steering, reference group and Belfast City Councillor meetings and focus groups with the local community.

At the same time, the practical implications of the new brand will be thoroughly explored across a broad range of possible physical, cultural and policy manifestations for how the brand will affect people's real, tangible experience of the city – the 'brand experience' that builds over time to help attain the vision of Belfast.

Tangible outputs of the project will be tools, resources and documentation that enable the successful and effective implementation of the new Belfast City Brand, including:

- Brand assets (logo, proposition, 'look and feel', imagery and verbal identity, etc.)
- Brand architecture – including using the new brand with existing brands in the city and throughout Northern Ireland
- Visual branding guidelines
- Brand Experience documentation and report
- Illustrated (in pictures and words) possible applications of the branding – web, collateral, signage etc

The creative visuals will be brought to committee for final sign off in March.

Suggested Timeline of Creative Development Phase

12 and 13th Feb	Focus Groups presented with creative options.
26th Feb	Reference Group (focus Groups with Belfast City Councillors)
March	Brand Creative to Committee
Feb and March	Business/investors breakfasts/internal audiences briefed on brand proposition, vision and visual identity.
April	Launch in Belfast Waterfront Hall (tbc)

Brand Roll Out Phase

In the short term, the brand roll out phase will take the following shape:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Stakeholder</u>
Brand influences the creative visuals of Belfast City Council communications and marketing materials, web, street dressing etc	BCC
Brand adoption by key local businesses	Private Sector
Brand adoption by key local media	Press, radio and TV (Belfast based)
Brand adoption by venues, events, festivals	Arts sector
Brand adoption in all tourism marketing and communications	BVCB
Brand adoption by Belfast retail sector	BCTC and BCCM
Brand adoption by Belfast educational organisations	UUJ, QUB, BMC
Brand adoption by community organisations	APBs, NICVA

BVCB have now commenced work on the roll-out of the brand. A sum of £250,000 has been earmarked in the 07/08 budget to support this process and bring the brand to life.

It is essential having come this far that we proceed to maximise the value of the branding. To realise this, and based on good practice elsewhere, it is essential that the Brand launch and rollout is carefully planned. The budget would cover a number of elements of the brand unveiling:

- Brand launch event aimed to maximise publicity and interest for brand. This event is planned for the Waterfront Hall but will also involve other sites throughout the City on the day and following on in the year. £25,000.00
- Development of promotional materials which will be designed from the logo. It is essential that the logo lends itself to marketing which in turn can produce its own income stream through sales in a number of venues across the City. £15,000.00
- The inclusion of the logo in all materials and networks where it can be placed. This includes Council controlled publications and events, and BVCB/BCCM channels. We are currently seeking further endorsements and use of the logo through wider channels in business, retail, education, the community and other sectors. £25,000.00
- The production of 2 new advertisements aimed primarily at the tourism market for use over the next year and beyond. It is intended that these advertisements will set new standards for the promotion of Belfast and so require higher funding than has been normal. £130,000.00
- Showcase promo for use in promotional and information work with citizens aimed to instil pride and give information on what the City has to offer. £25,000.00
- Showcase promo for use with business/investment sector detailing the new Belfast and the advantages of development/investment in the City. £25,000.00
- General DVD for distribution. £10,000.00

Should the next stage be successful and the Committee, and subsequently Council, approve the new logo then a real opportunity for impact would be to have the launch scheduled in late April just prior to the US International Conference in May 2008.

The logo itself will attract interest and it is likely that additional funding both direct and kink may be attracted from a number of sources in relation to wider impact. Discussions are taking place with a wide range of sectors and organisations on this matter.

Resource Implications

Financial

£250,000 (already within budget).

Recommendations

Members are asked:

- note progress of process;**
- approve funding as outlined for brand of £250k; and**
- agree in principle to the launch of new brand at end of April 2008.”**

During discussion in the matter, several Members indicated that, if the Department wished to launch the new Brand image prior to the US International Conference in May, it would be essential that it had the support of all Members of the Council.

In response, the Director of Development indicated that all Members of Council would be invited to the Branding Reference Group meeting due to be held on 26th February at which the final Brand would be selected. In addition, she undertook to hold briefings for the various Party Groupings represented on the Council. In answer to a Member's question, she informed the Committee that, to date, £150,000 had been spent on meetings of the Branding Reference Group and she was seeking approval to incur expenditure of £250,000 in connection with the launch of the Brand image.

After further discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided by the Director, agreed that an amount of £250,000 be set aside in connection with the launch activities for the new Brand and agreed, in principal, to it being launched at the end of April in the Belfast Waterfront Hall.

Tourism Development Update

Community Tourism

The Committee was reminded that in 2002 an application had been submitted to the Belfast Regeneration Office in connection with the implementation of a programme of community tourism initiatives in each of the Area Partnership Board localities.

The Head of Economic Initiatives informed the Members that this project had been delayed for a number of reasons. However, following a meeting in January between representatives of the Belfast Regeneration Office and the Area Partnership Boards, the Regeneration Office had indicated that it would announce shortly whether the funding for the project would be approved.

The Committee noted the information provided.

Café Culture

The Head of Economic Initiatives indicated that the adoption of a café culture by the hospitality sector had been curtailed by the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, which covered the obstruction of roads and pavements and was enforced by the Department for Regional Development. The situation had been exacerbated by the introduction of legislation which prohibited smoking in all enclosed workplaces and enclosed public places. Accordingly, in 2006, the Tourism Unit had established a Café Culture Steering Group involving representatives from all interested organisations. Subsequently, in July 2006 the Chairman of the former Tourism and Promotion of Belfast Sub-Committee had written to the Minister for Regional Development requesting that the 1993 Order be re-examined in order to accommodate café culture in Belfast. However, no reply had been received.

The Head of Economic Initiatives recommended that, since the matter required to be resolved, both the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Social Development be requested to meet with a deputation from the Committee to discuss the matter.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

Conference Subvention

The Committee agreed, under the terms of the Council's Subvention Policy, that £500 be allocated to the "Many Core and Reconfigurable Supercomputing" Conference and £1,000 be provided to both the "Second European Mediation" Conference and the "ARMO Global" Conference.

Economic Development Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information"

Co-financing for European Social Fund (ESF) applications

At the January 2008 meeting of the Development Committee, members received an update on European funding. They were reminded of council's successful application for funding from the European Social Fund (ESF). It aims to provide training to help those not currently in employment to find jobs within the hospitality and retail sectors. ESF projects are 65% funded and project promoters are expected to find the 35% co-financing from other sources.

Belfast City Council has been approached to provide co-financing to a number of other organisations who have made applications under the European Social fund programme.

Ulster Community Investment Trust (UCIT) Social Economy Event

At the December 2007 meeting of the Development Committee, members asked that consideration of a report on the proposal for sponsorship of the UCIT All-Island Social Enterprise Trade Show be deferred for consideration at a future date.

Collaboration with Northern Ireland Science Park (NISP)

Members will be aware that the Northern Ireland Science Park (NISP) delivered a range of activities last year which were co-financed by Belfast City Council. NISP has now submitted a proposal for additional activity in the next financial year and has asked Belfast City Council to make a financial contribution towards this work.

BITES (Business Improvements through Environmental Solutions) Tender: Request for delegated authority to accept tender

At the 8 August 2007 Development Committee, members approved an action plan for the development of the environmental industries in the city. This included the second phase of a programme to support business improvements through environmental solutions (BITES). A tender for the development and delivery of this programme was issued in January 2007.

Shopmobility – request for support

Members will be aware that the Shopmobility scheme has been supported by council since 1995 as part of its local economic development plan. A proposal for financial support of £25,000 for the current year of operation has been submitted for consideration.

Key Issues

Co-financing for European Social Fund (ESF) applications

The European Social Fund (ESF) provides funding for training measures to help people get into employment and enhance their career prospects. In October 2007, a call for projects under Priority 1 of the Northern Ireland ESF Programme – Helping People into Employment – was launched. The call closed in November 2007.

A number of organisations approached council to ask for support in advance of making their submissions. These were:

- LEAP (north Belfast): project to enhance employer and client engagement in north Belfast with a view to increasing employability of local people. The project aims to place around 300 local people in employment over the three year period of the programme.
- Stepping Stones (east Belfast): project to enhance employer and client engagement in east Belfast, focusing on addressing the needs of small businesses. The project aims to place around 220 local people in employment over the three year period of the programme.

Both organisations are part of the Citywide Employability Consortium (CEC) which has been supported by Belfast City Council since 2006.

These organisations have now been informed that their applications have been approved, pending economic appraisal by Department for Employment and Learning (DEL).

The financial support requested from Belfast City Council as co-financing is:

- LEAP: £48,684 per annum
- Stepping Stones: £32,665 per annum.

In the previous year, the funding allocated to each of these organisations as part of their work with the CEC was:

- LEAP: £48,506
- Stepping Stones: £42,500.

It is proposed that any co-financing offered to these ESF projects by Council would replace any future Council contribution to the CEC work for both organisations.

Belfast City Council has also been approached by Women in Business to co-finance a 'Women Returners Network'. This group will provide services such as e-mentoring, discussion forum and networking opportunities, work placement opportunities and newsletters to encourage women back into the labour market. The projects aims to:

- Direct 110 women to further course in enterprise/business start-up
- Direct 110 women to further educational courses
- Help 55 women find employment.

Women in Business have asked for co-financing from Belfast City Council of £30,419 in year 1. It is understood that they also intend to approach four other councils for co-funding, namely Newtownabbey Borough Council, Ards Borough Council, Castlereagh Borough Council and Lisburn City Council.

To date, Belfast City Council has not engaged in female-only business support activity given that this has not emerged as a priority within the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) research and it was an issue that had traditionally been led by Invest NI and organisations such as Women in Business.

Members should be aware that, given that this ESF is funded by the EU, any agreement to co-finance these projects will preclude the draw-down of monies from DETI (i.e. the money for co-financing will have to come from rates monies only).

Members are asked to consider co-financing the first year of the three projects as follows:

- LEAP: £48,684, providing that specific targets are met
- Stepping Stones: £32,665, providing that specific targets are met
- Women in Business: £30,419, on condition that the other named councils also approve co-financing of the project to an agreed level.

It has been confirmed with DEL that agreement to co-finance these schemes will have to be renewed on an annual basis. If Members are to agree on co-financing support for all three projects the total contribution will be £111,768.

Ulster Community Investment Trust (UCIT) Social Economy Event

Members are reminded that UCIT had requested sponsorship of £14,000 from Belfast City Council for its All-Island trade fair and conference in June 2008. Other confirmed sponsors include:

- International Fund for Ireland (IFI) – sponsorship of £43,000
- Co-operation Ireland – sponsorship of £43,000
- Invest NI – sponsorship of £12,500.

UCIT have asked Belfast City Council to contribute £14,000 towards the event. The funding will be used to cover costs of venue hire (St George's Market) and the gala dinner (Belfast Castle).

The event will be attended by up to 200 exhibitor delegates, 30 buyers, 60 statutory representatives and around 300 additional operators within the social economy sector in Ireland. It is expected that up to 40 of the exhibitor delegates will be from Belfast.

Members are asked to agree to sponsorship of this event, up to a value of £14,000.

Collaboration with Northern Ireland Science Park (NISP)

NISP has submitted a funding proposal to Belfast City Council to support the development and delivery of four programmes aimed at consolidating the knowledge industry in the city. The key components are:

- Springboard – a year-round, flagship programme that assists technology-based companies and entrepreneurs refine their business and financial strategies through a group mentoring process
- Frameworks – a series of 23 half-day workshops targeted at entrepreneurs and the research community. Content is delivered by experts from service providers (law firms, IP, accounting). Workshops are delivered onsite at the universities.

- Evening Series – Case studies of successful ventures from inside and outside of the region or leading innovation breakthroughs from established European technology companies delivered at the Innovation Centre
- 25K award – continuation and expansion of the successful programme to stimulate action around the identification of the most promising ideas from our research base

Each of these components is interrelated and, when combined, they create a rounded package of support for the most promising knowledge-based research or early stage ventures.

Belfast City Council support will be used towards Belfast-based companies and will predominantly cover costs related to the Frameworks initiative. However it is accepted that there is a win-win situation if all initiatives can be offered as a package to target businesses.

It is therefore recommended that members agree to the allocation of up to £60,000 towards the development and delivery of the NISP-CONNECT model, pending confirmation of additional support from the other identified public and private sector sources.

BITES (Business Improvements through Environmental Solutions) tender: request for delegated authority to accept tender

The deadline for submission of tenders for the delivery of this programme was 29 January 2007. In order to expedite the procurement process, members are requested to delegate authority to the Director of Development, in consultation with the Chair of the Development Committee, to accept the most advantageous tender for the works, within the overall available budget.

Shopmobility – request for support

Shopmobility currently operates from five locations within the city and, with the opening of its new location in Victoria Square, this will increase to six. It is also working to extend its facilities to a number of other venues including Belfast City Council parks, Belfast Zoo and the local hospitals. The service currently provides 44 scooters, 3 electric wheelchairs and 86 wheelchairs at events and venues all across Belfast.

The charity's annual operating budget is around £200,000.
Income to support the scheme includes:

- Department for Regional Development - £75,000
- Belfast Trust - £26,000
- Environment and Heritage Service - £24,000
- Department for Social Development - £25,000
- Wheelchair hire - £6,000
- Private/other income – £20,000

Members are asked to approve a request for £25,000 funding to support the current year's activities. This will cover costs relating to ongoing development as well as marketing and promotional activity.

Resource Implications

ESF applications:

- £48,684 towards LEAP project
- £32,665 towards Stepping Stones project
- £30,419 towards Women in Business project.

Ulster Community Investment Trust (UCIT) Social Economy Event: Request for £14,000 sponsorship.

Collaboration with Northern Ireland Science Park (NISP): financial contribution of £60,000 towards programme delivery requested.

Shopmobility: Request for £25,000 funding.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- Agree to co-finance the LEAP ESF application up to a maximum of £48,684 for one year, providing that specific targets are met and as a replacement for any contribution towards CEC activity by LEAP

- Agree to co-finance the Stepping Stones ESF application up to a maximum of £32,665 for one year, providing that specific targets are met and as a replacement for any contribution towards CEC activity by Stepping Stones
- Agree to co-finance the Women in Business ESF application up to a maximum of £30,419, on condition that the other named councils also agree to co-finance the project
- Agree to sponsorship of the UCIT Social Economy trade event, up to a maximum of £14,000
- Agree to the allocation of up to £60,000 towards the development and delivery of the NISP-CONNECT programme, pending confirmation of additional support from the other identified public and private sector sources
- Give delegated authority to the Director of Development, in consultation with the Chair of the Development Committee, to accept the most advantageous tender for the BITES programme, within the overall available budget
- Approve a request for £25,000 funding to support the current year's activities for Shopmobility.

Key to Abbreviations

ESF	- European Social Fund
UCIT	- Ulster Community Investment Trust
NISP	- Northern Ireland Science Park
BITES	- Business Improvements Through Environmental Solutions
LEAP	- Local Enterprise Action Programme
CEC	- Citywide Employability Consortium
DEL	- Department for Employment and Learning
GEM	- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
DETI	- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment"

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

Response to Ligoniel Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan

The Committee was reminded that twelve Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships were operating currently within Belfast and that they were all developing Action Plans for their areas. Each Plan detailed a series of actions and identified the organisations which the Partnership believed could assist them. In a number of cases the Council had been identified as the lead partner.

The Director reported that the Council had replied to five such Capital Plans and that a response had been prepared recently to the Action Plan submitted by the Ligoniel Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership, a copy of which had been circulated and was available on Modern.gov.

The Committee endorsed the contents of the Council's response to the Ligoniel Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership's Action Plan.

Strategic Regeneration Frameworks

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information"

Under the Renewing Communities Programme each Area Partnership Board (APB) has been resourced to, and tasked with, producing a Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for their area by the Department for Social Development. Each APB has engaged a consultancy team to support them in this work which is due for completion in June - September 2008. Whilst each APB is at a different stage in development, efforts are being made to co-ordinate activity across the frameworks.

Members will also be aware of the local masterplans being produced for Inner East, Lower Shankill, Lower Falls, Crumlin Road and Shore Road. These plans are being developed by DSD as part of Renewing Communities also. It is intended that the SRFs for each respective area will take account of these local plans.

Key Issues

Engagement with councillors in each partnership board area has been pursued directly by the APBs. Some councillors are participating on the steering groups of the SRFs whilst others input through the APB meetings and consultation processes. Ministers and MLAs have been engaged to a varying level dependent on the approach taken by the APB and the stage of development of their SRF.

Belfast City Council has not yet been formally invited to engage at political level on the SRF process. Senior officers have recently been invited by each APB to join the steering group of each SRF. This is an essential step in ensuring co-ordination with Council's own development processes including the preparation of an Asset Management Plan, a City Development Plan, and refreshed Capital City Strategy. Members will also be aware of the Council's production of a City-wide masterplan in 2003 which, although becoming a little dated, remains an extremely valuable document in setting out the context for the SRFs for each area.

DSD's approach to pursing regeneration frameworks on a partnership board by partnership board basis presents a number of issues. Whilst increased scope for analysing issues particular to North, South, East, West and the Shankill exists, there is the inherent danger of losing sight of the critical mass of the City as a whole. Without co-ordination and an assessment of the strengths and deficiencies of the City as a whole there can be no agreed Strategic Regeneration Framework for the City overall.

Council must be mindful of its approach to City-wide development and regeneration and the on-going process to develop a City Investment Fund which is fundamentally underpinned by a City Development Plan. The issues analysed and opportunities identified under the SRF process need to be integrated with the City Development Plan being drafted by Council. Similarly, active engagement by Council in the SRF process is wholly necessary to ensure that the resultant SRFs are meaningful and connected to the City Development Plan. Emerging out of these discussions there may be the need for a co-ordination framework to attach the SRFs to the City Development Plan. This may necessitate the refreshing of the Council's City-wide masterplan produced in 2003.

Status report on each SRF:

West

Deloitte have been appointed to produce the SRF which is due for completion in June. Comprehensive data analysis and interpretation has been undertaken, leading to housing, health, physical, social and economic profiles. Detailed mapping of the physical features of the area, land uses and opportunity sites has also been completed. Community engagement at an intensive level is due to commence shortly along with a range of sessions with business people, statutory agencies and politicians. The SRF is now at the stage of identifying the big ideas for West Belfast by considering its specific role in the City.

East

Paul Hogarth Company has been appointed to produce the SRF. They have now completed Stage 2 of the process following the information gathering, data analysis and interpretation stage as well as identifying key drivers for change and articulating concepts for the area. The Framework is underpinned by principles which recognise the active collaboration of sectors but which attaches key responsibility for economic development with the private sector. Concepts being explored at present include a reshaping

of the local economy, a networked governance approach, exploiting historical image, sustaining export industries in East Belfast, employing 'development gain to optimise the local impact of new investment, ensuring spatial connectivity with East Belfast and changing the physical fabric of the area'.

Shankill

Paul Hogarth Company has only recently been appointed to produce the SRF with the first meeting having taken place on 30th January. It is anticipated that the work will be completed inside 8 months. The SRF for the Shankill is intended to produce an outline view of the existing physical infrastructure with particular regard to business, retail, commercial, community and residential property balance and develop a view of potential future balanced land use and areas for development across the electoral wards of Shankill, Woodvale, Crumlin, Glencairn and Highfield. It is also intended that the SRF will make recommendations for improving transportation and traffic management within the area and which will improve links between Greater Shankill to the rest of the City in order that the area may benefit from, and participate in, the regeneration of Greater Belfast. The SRF will also help determine the shortfall in community, business and individual access to digital technology and develop proposals to enhance ICT use and place digital technology at the heart of local business and the community.

South

Hyder have been appointed to progress the SRF. Presently work is underway to create a physical structural map of the area, along with a mapping of the organisation's working in the area and their inter-relationships. Community consultation is also due to start shortly along with formal engagement of other players. Propositions around the environment, community, economy and management are being considered as starting points for concepts to be produced.

North

Deloitte have been appointed to produce the SRF which is due for completion in June. Comprehensive data analysis and interpretation has been undertaken, leading to community, housing, health, physical, social and economic profiles. Detailed mapping of the physical features of the area, land uses and opportunity sites are being completed. Community engagement at an intensive level is due to commence shortly along with a range of sessions with business people, statutory agencies and politicians.

Resource Implications

Financial

None requested at this stage.

Human Resources

Senior staff in Development and Core Improvement Team already engaged in process.

Asset and Other Implications

Will be dependent on an agreed Asset Management Plan and City Development Plan.

Recommendations

To note the preparation of SRFs for each Partnership Board area and to agree Council's active involvement in ensuring linkages to the City Development Plan.

Key to Abbreviations

APBs – Area Partnership Board

SRFs – Strategic Regeneration Framework

MLA – Members of the Legislative Assembly

DSD – Department for Social Development”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

Response to Draft Planning Policy Statement 18 - Renewable Energy

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 18 - ‘Renewable Energy’ was published for public consultation by the Planning and Environmental Policy Group of the Department of the Environment, on 23 November 2007. This policy is intended to supersede Policy PSU12 of the Departments ‘Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland’. The consultation period for Draft PPS18 closes on Friday 21 March 2008.

The aim of PPS 18 is to encourage and facilitate the provision of renewable energy and heat generating facilities in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment. PSU12 is considered insufficiently detailed to take account of the different forms of renewable energy development. More explicit guidance is required by the public to allow planning proposals to be better tailored to requirements of the Planning Service.

At present the NI Planning Service is undertaking a review of permitted development rights for small scale renewable development (micro-generation). This review could potentially remove the requirement to apply for planning permission for many small domestic renewable energy schemes. This review is expected to complete before the adoption of PPS18.

Key Issues

Draft PPS18 – ‘Renewable Energy’ has two policies Renewable Energy 1 and Renewable Energy 2. Policy RE1 relates the general principles of development and additional assessment criteria for wind energy development. Policy RE2 relates exclusively to passive solar design and the necessity for all new public sector development, large-scale urban development and dwellings in the countryside to demonstrate what consideration has been given to Passive Solar Design principles in the layout, siting and design of their proposals. Annex 1 and 2 provide information and best practice guidance for each form of renewable energy development. Annex 3 discusses in detail the community benefits arising from renewable energy development.

Belfast City Council recognises the importance of a comprehensive planning policy for the future of renewable energy development. Renewable energy developments are vitally important in limiting environmental damage and the promotion of such development is supported by BCC. Such development should however, be rigorously assessed to limit the impact upon residential and visual amenity.

Belfast City Council would be concerned with any attempt at piecemeal legislation, which will deal solely with renewable energy in the narrow context of planning; as such legislation could detrimentally impact upon other industries such as construction and eventually on the end-user or consumers/ residents.

Draft PPS18 provides an opportunity for the Planning Service, District Councils and other interested parties to undertake a comprehensive review of all issues surrounding climate change, renewable energy and reducing carbon emissions. The Council is of the view that Draft PPS 18 provides a good basis for more substantial debate inclusive of all parties regarding what we can all do to improve the built and natural environment in response to the threat of Climate Change.

The draft Council response relates to a number of issues including;

- the development plan process
- air quality monitoring
- methodologies for the acoustic impacts of development
- green house gas mitigation and
- the cost benefit of passive solar design principles

The latter two issues consider the overlap between the Draft PPS 18 with the Building Regulations particularly in light of the introduction of Part F Technical Booklet on (Conservation of Fuel and Power) which came into operation on the 30 November 2006 by virtue of The Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. In addition to the recent decision from the Minister of Finance and Personnel to set a target of a further 25% reduction in CO₂ emission from buildings.

The proposed responsibilities and work regarding solar passive designs may cause an obvious overlap between the work of the Planning Service and that of the Belfast City Council's Building Control Service. This issue requires further consideration and discussion on whether work in this area will necessitate joint working arrangements being created between the Council and the Planning Service to ensure passive design conditions are properly enforced at the planning and construction stages of any development.

The Council would consider it appropriate for the PPS to contain policy which requires local development plans to assess the potential development opportunities in their area for renewable energy technologies. The Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 does not contain any commitment to the goals of renewable energy or guidance as to where large scale renewable energy development would be acceptable.

Resource Implications

Financial

No additional direct financial implications are involved with these recommendations

In relation to the recommendations there may be a future requirement or need for joint working arrangements to be established as outlined in the main body of this report. This possible joint approach may have staff and resources implications for the Building Control Service, who would carry out such work on behalf of the Council.

Human Resources

There may in the future need to be joint working arrangements set up between the Planning Service and the Council which may have staff resource implications.

Asset and Other Implications

No additional asset implications are involved with these recommendations.

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider the content of the proposed draft response to PPS18, as set out in Appendix 1, and if appropriate endorse this as the formal response to the NI Planning Service consultation.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Draft Response to Draft PPS18 – ‘Renewable Energy’

Key to Abbreviations

PPS - Planning Policy Statement”

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the following comments be submitted as the Council's official response to Draft Planning Policy Statement 18 on Renewable Energy:

“The main policy objective of draft PPS18 is:

‘to encourage and facilitate the provision and siting of renewable energy generating facilities in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment’.

Belfast City Council strongly supports draft PPS18 and recognises the Regional Development Strategies (2025) commitment to address the causes and effects of climate change, which will have implications for lifestyles and the form of development in the future.

Belfast City Council agrees that strategic planning, to deal with key impacts that may arise from climate change, will be more cost effective than taking retrospective action.

In general terms draft PPS18 is to be welcomed as it provides up-to-date guidance on renewable energy developments and re-affirms the Departments commitment to ensuring developments are guided to appropriate locations. As a consequence it reflects the balance required to accommodate renewable energy developments.

However, the Council has concerns in relation to the processing times of applications for renewable energy development. Draft PPS18 indicates that extensive consultation will be undertaken by the NI Planning Service in the assessment of renewable energy development, in particular for wind turbines. The standard consultee turn-around time is normally 14 working days, however many consultee's can take much longer to respond due to staffing resources, lengthening the overall assessment time.

Many domestic renewable energy schemes are subsidised via schemes such as 'the Environment and Renewable Energy Fund Household Programme' and these schemes are dependant on the applicant being successful with their planning application. Delays in receiving planning permission may lead to funding delays.

Belfast City Council supports the structure and clarity of Polices RE1 & RE2 in providing much greater detail of the criteria for assessment of planning applications by the Department. The greater degree of guidance and accessibility to the public will potentially facilitate a wider up-take of renewable energy schemes.

Development Plans and Renewable Energy Commitment

Many local authorities throughout the UK have sought to include policies in their area plans which require new development to incorporate renewable energy and energy efficiency. The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 does not contain any commitment to the goals of renewable energy or guidance as to where large scale renewable energy development would be acceptable. For example the siting of wind farms which can be controversial as many residents in the locality feel that it may damage visual and residential amenity, should ideally have been considered within an area plan. Belfast City Council considers that the identification of suitable sites within an area plan reinforces renewable energy policies and their implementation.

Policy RE2 - Integrated Renewable Energy and Passive Solar Design

Passive Solar Design

The Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, introduced increased minimum legal requirements for the attainment of energy conservation and thus a reduction in CO₂ emissions from buildings; these were enacted on the 30th November 2006. These changes were significant and the process of adaptation is continuing. Notwithstanding the above, draft PPS 18 now stipulates that consideration must be given to Passive Solar design principles in the layout, siting and design of:

- All public sector development;
- Large-scale urban development (generally defined for the purposes of this policy as a site of 1ha or greater or a building of 5,000m² or greater); and
- Dwellings in the countryside.

The regulatory impact assessment for The Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 when they were introduced, estimated that there would be an increase of cost in complying with the European directive in respect of the conservation of energy within buildings. It is accepted across the construction industry that compliance with this directive resulted in a rise in the construction costs of buildings.

The Council recommends that in the introduction of policy a balance is sought between increased costs and the anticipated return. This balance should seek to ensure that policy and practice develop in such a way as to not to overburden or deter potential investment in the Northern Ireland economy.

Passive Solar Design

The Council would request greater clarification and evidence on the suitability of Passive Solar Design in Northern Ireland. It is a seasonal technology, which relies upon diffuse sun rays and for a large portion of the year in Ireland, solar impacts are limited. In these circumstances the design solution requires careful consideration to ensure that the seasonality is recognised.

Further clarification may also be required in relation to the implications for future developments in the vicinity of buildings which have passive solar equipment installations. Differentials in building heights and orientations in close urban proximity raise implications for the potential for development or redevelopment on adjacent properties which may impact upon or shadow the solar panel. It is not clear how this may restrict future development potential, in the vicinity of passive solar builds, or influence the decisions to invest in such technology where the long term benefits may not be controlled or protected from adverse implications from adjacent development.

Page 110 of the draft PPS18 lists the components of the PSD toolkit which may be employed. The Council would request clarification on the weight afforded to each element in terms of the potential contributions to CO₂ reduction.

Density and Brownfield development

The density of housing units in any new urban residential development may be affected by the need to apply the PSD principles and this may contradict the ethos of the 'Compact City' concept, which advocates the containment of urban development to avoid urban sprawl in to the surrounding Greenfield areas. In addition, PSD relies on development being orientated to maximise solar gain, whilst brownfield development in an existing urban areas may be constrained by the immediate environment and buildings surrounding the site. The application of PSD within urban settlements could if inappropriately applied contribute to a reduction in housing density and lead to increased pressure to development beyond the greenbelt.

PSD Implementation - Increased Development costs imposed on new developments:

In addition to the costs which are likely to be encountered by public sector development, the potential for increased costs in relation to residential development could be significant within a market, which has experienced a significant increase in unit costs. The development industry, until the market adjusts to such changes, is likely to seek to pass on the costs of renewable energy elements included in a new home such as solar panels or air source heat pumps. As this will further increase the cost of home ownership the Council would welcome research into the assessment or prediction of what the likely offset will be for purchasers of houses, which use energy from renewable sources.

Role of Building Control

Building regulations, in the main are a set of performance based standards which determine the minimum legal requirement at a point in time for the construction of our built environment. The regulations specify the outcomes and outputs developers should require for buildings and they allow a flexibility for designers in terms of what they intend to build.

Technical booklet Part F1 and F2 of these regulations currently sets out criteria for developers to improve energy conservation in buildings and already covers the effect of passive solar design. The council believes that Draft PPS18 in this regard could be considered to run contrary to what is contained within the Building Regulations as it seeks to introduce prescriptive requirements for passive solar design with no regard to the outcome or effect of these requirements on design considerations.

The Council would recommend that Passive Solar design be retained within the auspices of the building regulations for assessment by those who have technical capability in determining the outcome of the design features on the environment. We would also recommend that the designers be afforded the freedom to design for site specific aspect of their building and that the PPS be amended to allow greater flexibility in considering the visual impact, where it incorporates passive solar design features as a method of compliance with the building regulation requirements.

CO2 Emission Target

Although Draft PPS18 specifies that new developments should incorporate elements of Passive Solar Design it does not recommend the establishment of a minimum requirement for renewable provision in new developments and a target for new developments to cut their CO₂ emissions. Belfast City Council is committed to reducing its own carbon emissions in line with the UK government's domestic target of a 20% reduction below 1990 levels by 2010¹. The establishment of targets requires careful consideration as clarity would be essential both in relation to the basis for any target and the appropriate legislative control between Planning and Building Control. In addition a baseline position would be required in order to determine percentage reduction as this is a changing position that could be difficult to regulate or enforce. The Council would recommend that the limits of CO₂ emissions stay within the Building Regulations to ensure clarity.

¹ Belfast City Council, Carbon Management Action Plan, Local Authority Carbon Management Programme 2004 (www.carbontrust.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres)

Resources

In terms of resources the Council believes that it is essential that the Planning Service ensures that it is 'fit for purpose' in terms of staffing and technical capacity to enable them to administer the complexities of the technical issues to be assessed as a result of renewable energy developments.

Enforcement of PSD Principles

Point 4.44 states that 'Passive Solar Design concerns the fundamental design of a building; it cannot easily be dealt with by way of planning conditions'. However the enforcement of planning conditions relating to PSD principles must be as enforceable any other cosmetic or integral design element of a building. The supporting report written to accompany any application which includes PSD principles should be incorporated as an enforceable element of the planning application or else linked to building regulations approval.

This could be made feasible if the applicant detailed the utilised PSD principles on both the supporting statement and the building plans. Under such an approach any deviation from these principles could result in enforcement action requiring the modification of the building or proposed elements.

The Council would support the need for the effective enforcement of passive solar design principles. There may be an opportunity to exploit a functional overlap and potential for the Planning Service to enter joint working arrangements with the Councils, in particular the Building Control Service, to ensure that these principles are adhered to during construction. This potential early intervention and monitoring is critical as non-compliance could result in the necessity for action to secure the alteration or reconstruction of a building. PPS 18 could, in these circumstances lead to a situation whereby planning conditions made in respect of a building could be enforceable under the building regulations – this will require further discussion and exploration.

Limited Empirical Data of effectiveness of PSD

Draft PPS18 does not supply any observed or statistical data relating to the effectiveness of PSD principles. Rather the policy appears to approach the issue in broad terms in relation to effectiveness of PSD principles, without providing evidence of how this methodology had worked effectively when applied previously in

Northern Ireland or the wider UK. Indeed PSD principles are at best a complementary measure to other renewable energy schemes and perhaps the emphasis of the policy should be on the incorporation of substantive renewable energy technologies into new developments such as:

- Wind turbine
- Solar Pholtaic
- Solar Water Systems
- Ground source heat pumps
- Biomass

Evidence suggests that with this active technology there is a more concerted effort toward achieving an individual household reduction of 10% in CO₂ emissions whilst it is also accepted as being more relevant to small scale developments. The Council would additionally ask for more empirical data to clarify the relationship between a cost benefit analysis in relation to the application of the technology and the reduction of CO₂ emissions.

Permitted Development Rights

In regard to permitted development rights, a review of existing provision in Northern Ireland is currently underway by the NI Planning Service (Review of Permitted Development Rights for Small Scale Renewable Energy Development – commenced January 2007) and it is possible that residential properties will see their permitted development rights in relation to renewable energy proposals extended. At present there are very few circumstances under which renewable energy development could be incorporated into a home without requiring an application for planning permission. Rather than simply re-interpret existing planning legislation to allow renewable energy developments, there is a need for adequate and comprehensive permitted development rights related specifically to renewable energy to be recorded onto a comprehensive database maintained to supplement Building Control Service records which may in the future assist with any joint working arrangements.

However with the extension of PD rights there must be an appropriate balance between permitted development and the need to restrict those forms of renewable development which could impact upon the residential or visual amenities of residential developments. It is reasonable to consider that it is unacceptable for the amenity of neighbours to be reduced by excessive and intrusive vibration or noise from a micro-generation device

Community Benefits

(Arising out of the development of large scale renewable energy projects)

The creation of a format by which local communities can benefit from the development of large scale renewable energy projects is to be welcomed. The offsetting of potential negative externalities created by for example wind turbines which can detract from visual amenity (view) is necessary. However the critical issue is what format such compensation should take. Draft PPS18 suggests that compensation could take the form of a financial payment, the construction of a community facility or even the use of contractor services as needed. However the policy states that these agreements are entirely outside of the remit of the Planning Service and will not influence the assessment of any planning application. It is difficult to concur with this conclusion when a proposed development is considered to have a direct impact and the proposed amelioration may include proposals that have direct land use implications and require separate planning consents.

Community Benefits - Article 40 Agreements

Article 40 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 enables the Department to enter into Planning Agreements with any person who has an estate in that land for the purpose of facilitating, regulating or restricting the development or use of the land either permanently or for a specified period of time. This legislation should be employed by the department as the most appropriate vehicle for securing community benefits which arise from development. Utilising this legislation would ensure that community benefits are negotiated with the supervision of the Department and place less of an onus on the community to liaise with a developer.

The Council would seek further evidence that the generation of electrical power in one area which will supply another area, will not be disproportionately harmful to the community in which the technology is sited in terms of the direct local environmental impact on the host community.

Where such 'benefits' are outside of the Planning system and will not influence a planning application then Draft PPS18 should not need to state that developer offers are necessary. This issue gives rise to questions of who would be responsible for the assessment of the appropriateness such developer contributions. If the policy states that the Planning Service will have no involvement in this issue then it cannot consider whether a scheme provides sufficient community benefits.

The Council considers that it would be more appropriate to account for developer contributions within the policy for large scale renewable energy development, and then to establish an assessment test for the contributions, or perhaps an independent assessment process. It must be acknowledged that there will be potentially negative or contradictory externalities arising from renewable energy developments, the most obvious being the impacts on natural landscapes or the immediate local environments. In such circumstances it is rational to assume that a developer would seek to offset this negative externality by compensating the local community.

Section B45 – Planning Issues (Economic Benefit to local community)

Section B45 states that economic and social benefit to the communities will be given weight in assessing renewable energy proposals, particularly biomass energy crop production. Clarification is required as to the degree of weight carried by this factor. The justification of economic benefit to the local community could be used as a convenient pretext to override almost any negative effects of development. For example a scenario whereby a significant natural landscape is affected by a wind farm is justified because the local community benefits from a developer contribution or preferential electricity supply. The concept economic benefit has the potential to introduce uncertainty or confusion in regard to the balanced assessment of planning proposals. This issue should therefore be subject to further clarification as to the role economic benefit could play in the assessment of an application. It may be appropriate for each component of the planning policy criteria to be listed according to weight, for example:

- Impact of residential amenity
- Economic Benefit to local community
- Impact on visual amenity
- Road Traffic implications

This prioritisation of assessment criteria could not be applied equally in all development scenarios; this format would make planning assessment more predictable and less speculative.

Energy from Waste (Annex C)

Landfill Gas

Belfast City Council is committed to utilising its significant landfill gas reserves in the near future and therefore the decision not to include specific policy guidance in the main body of Draft PPS18 is disappointing. Landfill gas in particular offers an opportunity to derive energy in the short to medium term from a diminishing source.

The Renewable Obligation (NIRO) compels licensed electricity suppliers such as NIE to source an increasing proportion of electricity from renewable sources. Organisations such as Belfast City Council would seek to provide energy to NIE by utilising Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROC's), but require planning guidance in the form of planning policy statements to add a degree of certainty to future renewable energy planning. The Council as the owner of the Dargan Road landfill facility on the North Foreshore of Belfast Lough would seek within the near future to utilise the large amount of landfill gas which has accumulated on the site. This would result in the Council becoming a renewable energy generator selling electricity to NIE through the Renewable Obligation Certificates scheme. The council in the absence of a generation facility is currently flaring this gas at a rate of 2500 m³ per hour, which is sufficient to produce four megawatts of electricity and power up to 5000 homes.

Although Draft PPS18 does mention landfill gas in Annex C, it does not provide specific guidance on developments which utilise energy from waste within the main body of the policy. This is particularly important as this energy is derived from a diminishing source as landfilling operations across the province have in compliance with EU Policy been curtailed in recent years. The council would advocate policy guidance which provides a clear and definitive approach to development to extract energy from waste. The Council would reiterate the need to assist renewable energy producers by providing explicit development guidance, rather than providing generalised information in the annex of the document.

Energy from Waste (Excluded Conventional Technologies)

Belfast City Council considers that the definition of renewable energy employed in the composition of Draft PPS18 is inappropriate in the context of European and UK policies. The guidance on energy from waste in Annex C is exclusive and does not consider conventional Energy Recovery Incineration (ERI). ERI is the combustion of waste under controlled conditions in which the heat

released is recovered for a beneficial purpose. This may be to provide steam or hot water for industrial or domestic users, or for electricity generation. Combined heat and power (CHP) incinerators provide both heat and electricity. The fuel value (calorific value) of household waste is about one third that of coal: as a rough guide, for every 100,000 tonnes of ERI capacity about 7 megawatts (MW) of electricity could be exported to the grid to meet the needs of about 11,000 homes. Rather than exclude this method of recovering energy from waste, the Department should condition such developments, to ensure that thermal and electrical efficiency and / or combined heat and power targets are maintained. To exclude such development from consideration in Draft PPS18 would result in the loss of a significant amount of energy which can be provided if sufficiently monitored, with minimised environmental effects.

Biomass

Wood Burning Fuel Pellets - Delivery distances from supplier to consumer:

The number of pellet burning boilers installed in Northern Ireland has increased rapidly and this has led to fuel supply issues. A significant proportion of fuel pellets used in Northern Ireland are imported, which does not correspond with Policy RE1 which states that 'proposals will be expected to be located at, or as close as possible to, the source of the resource needed for that particular technology'. It is likely that suppliers will need to travel more than an average distance of 40 km to deliver fuel pellets which adds to the total carbon cost of the development.

Heating with wood pellets, a renewable fuel, is seen as an environmentally friendly alternative to fossil fuel heating, however wood pellet production and supply in the UK is still a key barrier to widespread uptake of wood pellet heating. A survey carried out by CONNESS GmbH, Austria and ECONERGY Ltd, Great Britain showed that in 2004 only ten wood pellet mills operated across the UK². This figure has increased however there is still a significant shortfall in domestic wood pellet production. Supply chain cost is an important factor in the entire wood pellet cost and that wood pellet produced locally brings lowest supply cost.

As a result of a domestic production shortfall, wood pellets have been imported from the Baltic countries which are lower in price than UK produced pellets, although transported over long distances. This travel associated with supply leads to an increase in the 'carbon cost' of the technology which detracts from the overall goals of reducing CO2 emission.

² Schuler, Anton Leander 'Developing a wood pellet fuel sector in South Yorkshire', (www.wood-fuel.org.uk)

There are many reasons to support the development of the UK bio fuels industry for example, demonstrated carbon savings achievable in the transport fuel sector; increased UK fuel security and benefits to the rural economy. However the question of whether there is sufficient spare agricultural land in Northern Ireland to meet the supply for the forthcoming demand for bio fuels should be addressed. Another key target in reducing carbon emissions is to attain a high level of self-sufficiency in the provision of food and other agricultural products.

Greenhouse Gas Mitigation

A further planning issue listed in section B45 is Greenhouse Gas Mitigation (GHGs). This is a complex issue, which must be subject to careful assessment. In regard to the calculation of greenhouse gas mitigation it is not clear whether this merely related to the carbon footprint associated with the activity of fuel burning or the mitigation associated with the production and delivery of fuel crops. The concept of total carbon cost would be a more appropriate measurement.

In regard to the assessment of the mitigation proposals, the Council would seek clarification as to whether or not the Department intend to carry out and publish such a technical assessment as part of the planning application assessment report.

Protection of Built and Natural Heritage

Draft PPS18 demonstrates good awareness of issues relating to the impact of renewable energy installations on the archaeological and built heritage and on aesthetic quality. Within the overall context of promoting sustainability with planning policy, it is worth noting that in terms of 'total carbon cost' there are substantial environmental benefits to perseveration of the historic or older building stock over new build. This is demonstrable despite the ability to reduce ongoing energy consumption in newer developments. Given the widely held public perception that new build is superior this is perhaps a point that needs to be more clearly emphasised.

In respect of the protection of built heritage and ancient monuments in the natural landscape, rigorous planning assessment must be undertaken to safeguard against the accumulation of for example wind turbines in the setting of a significant historical building/monument. Such assessment would require special consideration in line with Planning Policy Statement 6: 'Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage' and PPS 6 Addendum: 'Areas of Townscape Character'.

Protection of Air Quality in Belfast

Response by Belfast City Council's Environment Protection Unit
In response to the recently published Draft Planning Policy Statement 18 - 'Renewable Energy' The Environmental Protection Unit wish to submit the following comments.

The Environmental Protection Unit within the Council's Environmental Health Department is a statutory consultee for the Planning Service for any development that has the potential to have an impact on air quality within Belfast Council boundary. The Unit is also tasked to carry out the duties under the Environment (NI) Order 2002 that places a responsibility on local authorities to monitor, review and assess air quality within its boundary. Consequently, the Unit has developed a detailed understanding and knowledge of air quality issues that pose a risk to human health. It is therefore considered that the Unit has the necessary skills and experience to comment on the implications of the Draft Planning Policy Statement 18 and its potential impact on air quality.

The Unit welcomes the over riding objective to "encourage and facilitate the provision and siting of renewable energy generating facilities in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment". It recognises the role that renewable energy has in reducing green house gas emissions and assisting in diversifying Northern Ireland's energy supplies.

The Unit would like to draw the Department of the Environment's attention to the ten areas within Northern Ireland where fine particulates (PM^{10}) exceed or are predicted to exceed the 2004 National Air Quality Strategy Objective. One of these areas falls within the Belfast City Council area and encompasses the M1-Westlink corridor. This area was predicted to exceed the annual mean objective (40 ug/m^3) and the 24 hour mean objective (50 ug/m^3 not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year). Recent monitoring within this area has confirmed these predictions and to date (December 2007) 37 days have seen concentrations in excess of 50 ug/m^3 . These levels of fine particulates are some of the highest levels monitored anywhere in the UK.

The Air Quality Standards Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2007 introduced a further objective for ultra fine particulates ($PM^{2.5}$). This objective sets a target for exposure reduction of 20% in concentrations at urban background sites between the years 2010 and 2020. By the year 2020 $PM^{2.5}$ annual means should not exceed 25 ug/m^3 . Responsibility for regional exposure reduction for $PM^{2.5}$ will fall upon the Department of the Environment (NI).

Eleven areas within Northern Ireland have been declared on the grounds that concentrations of nitrogen dioxide exceed or are predicted to exceed the 2005 National Air Quality Strategy Objective. Four of these areas occur within the Belfast City Council area. These areas are predicted to exceed the annual mean objective (40 ug/m^3) and one area (the Westlink-M1 corridor) is also predicted to exceed the hourly mean (200 ug/m^3 not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year). Recent monitoring within this area has confirmed these predictions and to date (December 2007) the annual mean is 64 ug/m^3 , some 60% higher than the 2005 objective.

Belfast City Council is striving to meet the 2004, 2005 and 2007 objectives. In May 2006, the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan was launched and identified 164 steps that would assist in the reduction of air quality pollutants across the city. It is the opinion of this Unit that developments involving combustion have the potential to significantly undermine these efforts and result in the failure to meet these objectives. Consequently, this Unit would consider the inappropriate siting of renewable energy generating facilities within Belfast City as a potential source of emissions that could have a direct impact on human health. This Unit therefore proposes that any new energy generating development should be subjected to a rigorous pre-assessment to determine the emissions to air and to demonstrate that these emissions have minimal adverse effect. This is particularly prevalent when considering biomass plant. Similarly, developments that attract vehicle movements have the potential to adversely impact air quality due to vehicle emissions. Consequently, any large scale biomass generators would require detailed assessment of not only the generator emissions but traffic generated emissions.

The Unit would also like to highlight that areas within Belfast City are designated as Smoke Control Areas and all new Biomass generators (regardless of size) would have to adhere to the Clean Air (Northern Ireland) Order 1981.

This Unit is highly supportive of any initiative to encourage and increase the amount of energy generation from renewable resources however the Planning Policy Statement 18 would benefit from clear statements and clarification on the balance required between the need to promote new energy schemes and to offset potentially negative environmental impacts.

Wind Farm noise Measurement

Draft PPS18 states that (Building Regulation) BS4142 will not be the preferred method of assessment for noise levels generated from wind turbines. Amplification is required as to the methodology employed in preference to BS4142. 'The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms' (ETSU-R-97), describes a framework for

the measurement of wind farm noise and gives indicative noise levels calculated to offer a reasonable degree of protection to wind farm neighbours, without placing unreasonable restrictions on wind farm development. In addition, any acoustic measurement must take account of the construction or maintenance noise levels of a wind farm. Amplification is required within Draft PPS18 as to how an additional turbine is to be assessed in an existing factory setting, employing this methodology. Clarification is also required as to the role Belfast City Council will play as an expert environmental health consultant.

Compositional Errors in Document

Error in document relating to Page 55 Paragraph A.122 refers to paragraph A.36 as containing additional information relevant to an EIA, however this is an error and A.122 should refer to A.35 instead.

Error in document relating to Page 36 Paragraph A.38 states that paragraph A.117 contains information relating to when an EIA is deemed necessary to accompany a development application. However paragraph A.123 details this information and A.117 relates to decommissioning."

Renewing the Routes - Update on Antrim Road and York Road

The Director reported that it was anticipated that both the public artwork to be erected at Carlisle Circus and the Gateway Piece for York Road would be completed in March. Following completion of the commercial shop frontage scheme in York Road the potential for an additional local signage project had been identified under funding which was available from within the existing budget.

She indicated that the Antrim Road scheme had been allocated an additional £80,000 and York Road scheme an additional £60,000 under the Urban II Programme and she outlined the potential projects which would benefit from the additional funding.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Chairman