

Development Committee

Wednesday, 13th August, 2008

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor M. Browne (Chairman); and
Councillors Campbell, Convery, Crozier, Cunningham,
Ekin, Humphrey, B. Kelly, Kyle, Lavery, C. Maskey,
P. Maskey, McCarthy, McCausland, Mhic Giolla Mhin
and Rodgers.

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.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor D. Dodds.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 11th and 24th June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on the 1st July, subject to:

- (i) the amendment of the minute of 11th June under the heading "Tourism Unit Update – Sister Cities International 2008 Annual Conference" to provide that the party travelling to Kansas be authorised to travel economy class only;
- (ii) the amendment of the minute of 11th June under the heading "Revenue and Community Development Project Grants – Steadfast Association" to provide that the application for grant-aid be refused on the grounds that it did not meet the criteria in so far as it was an organisation located outside the Belfast District Electoral Area Boundary; and
- (iii) the amendment of the minute of 11th June under the heading "Review of the Council's Play Service" to provide that the Consultative Group be established with each of the Party Groupings on the Council having one seat only.

**Presentation from Amnesty International regarding
the Council's Sister City Relationship with Hefei**

The Chairman reminded the Members that during July he had advised them that he had received a request from Amnesty International to make a presentation to the August meeting of the Committee regarding the Council's Sister City relationship with Hefei, with particular reference to human rights issues in that area of China. He advised the Committee that, since no Member had objected to the presentation being made, representatives of Amnesty International were in attendance. The Committee agreed that the deputation be received and, accordingly, Ms. Patricia Campbell, Campaigner, and Mr. Bernard O'Hare, China Country Specialist, were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Ms. Campbell thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address it. She advised the Committee that human rights in China was a priority issue for Amnesty International.

Mr. O'Hare indicated that the organisation neither wished to discourage trade with Hefei nor did it want Belfast to sever its links with that city. However, it would like the Council to use its influence to promote the issue of human rights in China through its dealings with officials in Hefei. He informed the Members that in China people were tortured, the death penalty was applied, dissidents and religious activists were imprisoned, publications and the internet were censored and trade unions were banned. In addition, the One Child Policy was enforced in a coercive manner through forced sterilisations and abortions and Christians were prosecuted for printing bibles and holding church services in their homes. He indicated that in China more people were executed each year than in the rest of the world combined and that a total of sixty-eight different crimes, including non-violent ones, carried the death penalty. For example, in Hefei during 1996 at least eighteen people had been executed and in 2000 six persons are known to have been executed for crimes which had included theft and damaging the electricity supply.

He indicated that, with its Sister City relationship, the Council was in a unique position to provide support and to encourage progress in the field of human rights in Hefei. Mr. O'Hare informed the Members that, contrary to popular belief, local officials in China had considerable power as the country was not controlled from Beijing. He stated that China did listen to organisations such as Belfast City Council. Therefore, since local officials could influence how policy was put into practice, if the Council were to raise human rights issues with officials in Hefei, human rights in that city might well improve.

Mr. O'Hare pointed out that, with the Olympic Games being held in China, it was important that Belfast used this opportunity to support the Hefei authorities to improve human rights in that city and act as a flagship for change in China. He concluded his presentation by requesting that the Council:

- (i) promote the integration of human rights dialogue and education into its plans for the Council's relationship with Hefei;
- (ii) put human rights on the agenda during all future meetings with the Hefei civic leadership;

- (iii) raise human rights issues with all official visitors from Hefei to Belfast; and
- (iv) ensure that Council representatives raised human rights concerns during all official visits to Hefei.

He indicated that by undertaking these actions the Council would help ensure that the legacy of the 2008 Olympic Games would mean improved human rights for the people of Hefei and the rest of China. He stated that Amnesty International had issued a press release earlier in the day which had called on the Council to adopt these four points.

The representatives from Amnesty International then answered various questions which were put to them by the Members. During this discussion, the representatives from the organisation indicated that they would be prepared to provide material to the Council regarding human rights issues in the Hefei region. The deputation then withdrew from the meeting.

During discussion in the matter, several Members indicated that the four points which Amnesty International had requested that the Council adopt in its dealings with Hefei were reasonable. The view was expressed also that they should be applied not only to the Council's dealings with Hefei but to the other cities with which the Council had a Sister City relationship. Other Members were of the opinion that, by issuing a press release, Amnesty International had placed the Committee in an invidious position and that it would have been preferable to have received a report next month which would provide information on how the four points could be embodied into the relationship with Hefei, whether or not by so doing the relationship with Hefei would be damaged and how Belfast businesses had benefited from the existing relationship with Hefei. This would provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider the points raised by Amnesty International and make a decision on an informed basis.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor P. Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor Attwood,

That the Committee agrees to:

- (i) promote the integration of human rights dialogue and education into the Council's relationship with Hefei;
- (ii) put human rights on the agenda during all future meetings with the Hefei civic leadership;
- (iii) raise human rights issues with all official visitors from Hefei to Belfast; and
- (iv) ensure that Council representatives raise human rights concerns during all official visits to Hefei.

On a vote by show of hands twelve Members voted in favour of the proposal and none against and it was accordingly declared carried.

West Belfast and Greater Shankill Enterprise Council

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 27th February under the heading "Renewing Communities Local Masterplans – West Belfast and Greater Shankill Enterprise Council" which, at the request of Councillor D. Dodds, had been taken back at the Council meeting on the 1st April, and which the Committee had deferred consideration of at its meetings on 9th April, 14th May and 11th June. An extract of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

"Renewing Communities Local Masterplans"

The Head of Economic Initiatives reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 21st February, it had considered a report regarding Strategic Regional Frameworks. She informed the Members that the presentations to be made to the Committee on the local Masterplans would operate within these Strategic Regional Frameworks.

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

'Relevant Background Information'

The Development Committee at the meeting in December agreed to receive presentations in relation to the development of the five local area Masterplans within Belfast, by RPS on behalf of the Department for Social Development, and a spatial regeneration plan for West Belfast & Greater Shankill being developed by consultants on behalf of the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Enterprise Council.

The proposed presentations seek to provide an update on the work that has been carried out by various consultants since their appointment last year to develop the proposed documents.

Key Issues

Local Area Masterplans

The Masterplans are being developed by DSD as part of the Renewing Communities Agenda and are intended to identify strategic action required to address areas of major dereliction. The documents are intended to 'provide a vehicle to coordinate and orchestrate public sector investment and leverage in private sector investment'.

RPS since appointment has been engaged in consultations and data identification, across all of the areas, to inform their work and provide a context to any future recommendations. As part of this process they have met with representatives from a range of organisations including Council Officers and Members.

The consultancy team is currently drawing up draft masterplans to capture the economic opportunities identified. This work will include development of investment options, proposed street environmental works, proposed site acquisitions, early wins and longer-term aspirations. The proposals will be included within the draft plans, which are projected to be completed sometime after Easter.

West Belfast & Greater Shankill Spatial Regeneration Plan

The establishment of the Enterprise Council was a key recommendation of the Task Forces' reports, published in February 2002. It was envisaged that the Enterprise Council could assist in implementing the recommendations of the Task Forces which pertained to the local small business sector bringing greater coherence to the promotion of and support for local businesses. The aim of the Council is 'To release the productivity and economic potential of the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Task Force area and their inhabitants through education, enterprise and investment - both indigenous and foreign direct investment - thereby boosting local incomes and employment opportunities and facilitating the renewal and regeneration of the area'.

One of the six core objectives for the Enterprise Council is to develop a spatial regeneration plan for West Belfast & Greater Shankill from the perspective of business and entrepreneurial development, consistent with our vision of the area as a vibrant economic area within the Belfast region. This proposed spatial plan for West Belfast and Greater Shankill is therefore being funded and undertaken on behalf of the business community in area. During initial consultations with the appointed consultants it was suggested that it would be beneficial for the Committee to be made aware of the work which this privately funded organisation was undertaking.

The approach being adopted in the spatial regeneration plan is to focus on the identification of the primary regeneration drivers for the area and to develop more detailed concepts around these priority projects. The Enterprise Council in making the presentation to the

Committee is seeking to both raise awareness of the initiative and if appropriate endorsement of the approach by the Council.

Resource Implications

Financial

No additional financial implications involved with these recommendations.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **Note the information in respect of the presentations; and**
- **Consider the endorsement of the spatial regeneration approach for West Belfast and Greater Shankill.'**

The Committee was advised that deputations on behalf of the Department for Social Development and the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Enterprise Council were in attendance to address the meeting regarding their plans.....

West Belfast and Greater Shankill Enterprise Council

Messrs. Padraic White, Chairman and Tony Morgan, Chief Executive Officer with the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Enterprise Council, together with Mr. Richard Griffin, Colin Buchanan and Partners, and Mr. Michael Doherty, Mackle Doherty Associates, were admitted to the Meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr. White thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address it and indicated that the Enterprise Council operated on behalf of the small and medium-sized enterprises in the West Belfast and Greater Shankill areas. He informed the Members that the residents of these areas had been demoralised due to the two major regeneration projects which would have benefited both communities, namely the development of the former Mackies site and the proposal to develop a university at Springvale, had not materialised. There was therefore, at present, no major investment project which would provide employment opportunities for the residents in those areas. The Enterprise Council believed that it could develop projects which would interest investors and, having raised £40,000 from the private sector within a two-month period, had funded the Spatial Regeneration Plan for the West Belfast and Greater Shankill area in order to provide:

- (i) a coherent development view from the small and medium-sized enterprises located within the areas;*
- (ii) a business input to the Strategic Regional Frameworks for the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Partnership Boards; and*
- (iii) an informed basis of dialogue with the Council as it developed its City-wide plans.*

Mr. Doherty, with the assistance of visual aids, addressed the Committee regarding the various economic drivers, assets and inhibitors to the proposals contained within the Masterplan. He indicated that it was the Enterprise Council's intention to promote projects which would reduce the physical severance between the City centre and surrounding neighbourhoods and referred to examples of similar schemes in Barcelona and Paris which had done so successfully. He pointed out that current planning restrictions which prohibited the construction of office blocks outside the City centre acted against the development of the economy in the West Belfast and Greater Shankill areas. He informed the Members that the Enterprise Council was of the view that the Belfast Hills were a resource which should be developed, particularly from a tourism perspective. However, there were no access points to the Hills from the West Belfast or Greater Shankill areas and this would require to be addressed. He pointed out that the areas had considerable tourism potential and had much to offer visitors. However, since no hotel was located currently within these areas, 'visitor spend' was limited.

During discussion on the presentation, the representatives from the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Enterprise Council answered various questions which were put to them by the Members. Mr. White indicated that the Enterprise Council was keen to identify five regeneration projects for the area and indicated that the developers of the Titanic Quarter had taken an interest in the organisation's proposals. He pointed out that the Enterprise Council had been impressed by the commitment of entrepreneurs to its proposals and that the aim of the Masterplan was to encourage potential investors, thereby resulting in people staying and spending money in the West Belfast and Greater Shankill areas.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from the Enterprise Council for attending and the latter then retired from the meeting.

Following discussion on the presentation and the comments thereon, the Committee agreed to endorse the Spatial Regeneration Plan proposed by the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Enterprise Council."

A Member informed the Committee that, having met on two occasions with representatives from the Enterprise Council, it was obvious that the Spatial Regeneration Plan for that area of the City had not yet been completed. He therefore suggested that the decision which the Committee had taken at its meeting on 27th February be amended to indicate that the Committee welcomed the presentation,

commended the Enterprise Council for the work which it had undertaken in connection with the Spatial Regeneration Plan for that area of the City and looked forward to receiving the organisation at a future meeting when its Plan had been completed.

The Committee agreed to amend the minute of 27th February as suggested.

Lagan Canal Restoration

The Committee considered the undernoted report, together with additional information which was circulated at the meeting:

“Relevant Background Information

Lagan Gateway Project Update

Members will be aware that funding of £1million has been made available by Ulster Garden Villages Limited towards the reopening of the gateway Lock number one at Stranmillis. An action plan which outlined the proposed activities to be developed in relation to the key aspects of the project, including identifying funding, stakeholder engagement, creating awareness of the Lagan Corridor, sustainability and examining best practice, was approved at the Development Committee meeting held on 12 September 2007. Approval was also given at a meeting of the Tourism and Promotion of Belfast Sub-Committee held on 7 February 2007 for an initial two-year funding commitment to the Lagan Canal Restoration Trust.

As part of the work plan and consultation process, discussions have been held with a number of key Lagan Corridor stakeholders including the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL), Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI), Department of Social Development Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate (DSD), Northern Ireland Planning Service, Ulster Waterways Group, Waterways Ireland, Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Lagan Valley Regional Park and Scott Wilson Consultants.

As part of the consultation process, a Lagan Corridor Steering Group has been established and a seminar took place in November 2007. Further developments include:

1. **Lagan Gateway Project Scoping Study** A Scoping Study defining the Lagan Gateway Project has been completed. Tourism Development in conjunction with Estates and Project Management units is now progressing towards a full Economic Appraisal of this project, whose remit will include an examination of the Lagan, Farset and Connswater river network, the development of the Canal and the linkages between them.

2. A Topographical and River Survey has been completed for Lock 1 Stranmillis.
3. A three dimensional model of the proposed development at Lock 1 Stranmillis has been completed.
4. A virtual (computer generated) model has been commissioned which will allow detailed examination of the project through 360 degrees. This interactive 3D environment will allow a user to navigate around in real-time and assess views from any location. It will be compatible with use on the Council Website and will also be used as a marketing and promotional tool.
5. Interpretative signage has been commissioned, will be sited close to Lock 1 and include interpretation of the Lagan Navigation, the history of the area, the river and canal. It is anticipated that this signage will dovetail with DSD signage that aims to link areas along the Lagan from Belfast Harbour to Stranmillis.
6. A number of funding applications are being explored
7. As part of the COMET Multi-annual Plan (2007 – 2013) for the Comet Region being submitted to SEUPB for Interreg IV funding, Belfast City Council as a COMET partner along with Lisburn City Council has developed an application, the aim of which is to facilitate the development of a cross-border tourism product, in this case, the development of the Lagan Navigation. Restoration of the Lagan Navigation, along with the work already planned to restore the Ulster Canal, would provide a vital link from Belfast through to Lough Neagh the hub for the waterways of Northern Ireland and into the west including Co Donegal and Ballyshannon.
8. As part of the COMET bid, a workshop was held on the 6 June, at the Killyhevlin Hotel Enniskillen the aim of which was to raise awareness of the potential to establish a single inland waterway with a maritime connection at either end linking the East and West coasts of Ulster to form new water based tourism product. The workshop in Enniskillen attracted support from Jeffrey Donaldson MP, MLA and Tánaiste, Mary Coughlan TD. The overall aim was to raise awareness and buy-in from stakeholders especially Central Government and Waterways Ireland and to look at formalising a Working Group to take the project forward.

9. A new web page has been constructed that highlights the Lagan Corridor Navigation and the proposed development at Lock 1 Stranmillis. This web page has been added to Belfast City Council's website www.belfastcity.gov.uk/lagan
10. A site meeting was arranged for members of the Development Committee, on Wednesday 4 June. Representatives from Department of Social Development Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate, Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, Lagan Valley Regional Park Board, Lagan Trust Manager and Belfast City Council Officers visited the Lagan Lookout to Locks 1, 2 and 3 via the Tow Path.
11. Waterways Ireland arranged a best practice visit for the Lagan Steering Group to Ballyconnell Lock in Co Cavan. The purpose of the visit was to view the operation of the lock and gain an understanding and insight into the benefits of canal restoration.
12. Ms Cathy Burns has recently been appointed as Lagan Canal Restoration Trust Manager. Ms Burns is based in Craigavon and is currently undertaking familiarisation with the key partners including Belfast City Council and she is exploring options for the establishment of the Trust.

The Lagan Navigation Trust

Members are reminded that, at its meeting held on 27 November 2006, it had approved, in principle, a draft business plan for the establishment of a Lagan Canal Restoration Trust, with approval that the Council would contribute a sum of £14,500 per year, over the next two financial years.

Following the acceptance of a draft business plan it was decided that a partnership organisation should be established representing core funding bodies and relevant stakeholders. This would take the form of a not for profit company limited by guarantee which will apply for charitable status and its lifespan will be limited to the restoration of the canal.

Funding has been provided for the appointment of core staff for the initial three years and the Trust manager has been in post from February 2008. Progress to date has focused on the formal establishment of the Trust with agreement on the structure, membership and roles.

The next stage is the appointment of members to a Shadow Board with core funding bodies represented by two elected members from each of the four councils of Belfast, Castlereagh, Craigavon and Lisburn, and one advisor each from the Department of the Environment and Department of Culture Arts and Leisure. In addition key user group representation will be one member each from the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland, the Lagan Branch of the Inland Waterways of Ireland, the Ulster Waterways Group and a further recreation user group representative. It is envisaged the Trust Board may meet every three months and at a separate AGM.

Resource Implications

- A sum of £14,500 has been included in the current Tourism Estimates towards establishing the Trust.
- The estimated total cost for the Belfast City Council Lagan Gateway Project is £7.9 million.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Members note the contents of the Lagan Gateway Project Scoping Study. (A copy of the full report is available in the Members Rooms)
2. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Development Committee are appointed as the Belfast City Council representatives on the Shadow Board of the Lagan Canal Trust.”

The Head of Economic Initiatives informed the Committee that the key elements of the Lagan Gateway Project, which would be undertaken at Lock 1 and would cost in the region of £3 million, would include:

- (i) a bridge connecting Lockview Road, Annadale Embankment and Belvoir Forest;
- (ii) a new lock which would permit passage by boats;
- (iii) a new slipway for boat access and events; and
- (iv) a new visitors centre with café, toilets and interpretive facilities.

In addition, the project would result in a facility which would act as a gateway into the Lagan Valley Regional Park. She pointed out that Ulster Garden Villages had indicated that it would provide the sum of £1 million towards the work on the understanding that matched funding was provided from other sources. In addition to the work at Lock 1, it was intended that:

- (i) a lock be provided, at a cost of £2 million, at the Lagan Weir to enable boats to pass through it; and
- (ii) improvements be carried out to Locks 2 and 3 at a cost of £1.5 million each.

The result of this work being undertaken would mean that the Lagan would become navigable within the Belfast City Council boundary. She indicated that approaches had been made to various organisations to obtain funding to undertake both the Lagan Gateway Project, together with the work at the Lagan Weir and Locks 2 and 3.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report regarding the Lagan Gateway Project and the information which had been provided by the Head of Economic Initiatives. In addition, the Committee agreed that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman be nominated to represent the Council on the shadow board of the Lagan Canal Trust.

Northern Ireland Tourism Board Draft Corporate Plan 2008-2011

The Members were advised that the Council had been asked to respond to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's Draft Corporate Plan 2008-2011, which identified the strategic direction and key priorities which the Board would pursue during the next three year period.

During discussion, the Committee approved the undernoted response, subject to the inclusion of the following points:- the Council recognises the importance of ensuring that the benefits of tourism are cascaded down to local level and a reference to the need for additional accommodation in Belfast to be provided:

“NITB welcomes comment on any aspect of the draft Corporate Plan 2008-2011 however, we would particularly value your comments on the following areas:

Section 3.3 ‘critical success factors as strategy drivers’

In Section 3 NITB has analysed key market trends to identify those areas that will be critical to developing Northern Ireland tourism.

Question 1: (a) Are there any additional success factors to those listed at the end of section 3 that you consider critical? (b) If yes, what are they and what strategies are needed to drive their success?

Unique Proposition – Further investment in product development, with delivery of the Signature Projects as a priority. Whilst the Signature Projects should be a priority, this must not be at a cost to the development of a wider range of tourism products which are required to meet visitor expectations. In Belfast, there is

a lack of tangible product - things that people can go and do, so investment in this is critical. Cultural Tourism, in particular museums, galleries, festivals, events and cuisine, is still the number one motivator for European tourism and has now risen to 40% of all travel. £4.5 million in product portfolio development is too small an allocation to resolve this both in Belfast and throughout Northern Ireland. After the creation of the signature project, serious gaps will still exist if this is not addressed.

The trends identified are similar to those experienced in the greater Belfast area, however Belfast City Council would caution against setting a strategic direction based on one year's performance and would recommend flexibility in the strategy to allow for changes that might be necessary following longer term trend analysis.

Belfast City Council agrees that GB and ROI present substantial opportunities, however, we would draw attention to the fact that mainland Europe is also key and that close to home markets should not be prioritised over Europe, specifically in the current currency climate and with increased access.

The importance of differentiation is key and the new Belfast Brand will be central to this, alongside the Northern Ireland brand which is currently being developed.

The critical success factors are all relevant, however focus on new technology and its application in general across the wider NI tourism industry is essential in order to meet visitor expectations.

Section 4: 'strategic direction'

Section 4 outlines what NITB considers to be the strategic direction for tourism growth in Northern Ireland. We would welcome your views and comments on the strategies identified to deliver tourism growth namely:

Question 2 (a): The need for a more developed tourism infrastructure. (See 4.1 tourism infrastructure).

Belfast City Council welcomes and supports the outlined strategic direction based on:

- Brand Identity – which must include the Belfast brand as gateway to NI
- Signature projects
- Accommodation development – which must be supported by reviewed planning policy and fiscal incentives

- Golf Resorts - although development of Parkland golf resorts must not be at the expense of marketing the world class links courses that exist.
- Conference/exhibition competitive positioning – increased capacity needs to be supported in order to ensure NI continues to compete for conferences on an international level

Additional key themes that should be included as part of the tourism infrastructure are:

- Public transport - linkage of points of entry to city centre and then to tourism signature projects to deliver on regional spread.
- International standard facilities for events and quality events as attractors need to have sustained support and investment.
- Cruise market infrastructure at the Port of Belfast - needs to be upgraded, particularly since this market generates 60,000 visitors a year and quality of facilities will be key to it being sustained.

Question 2 (b): The appropriateness of the 4 key product areas as the focus for product development and marketing? (See 4.1 developing the product portfolio).

Belfast City Council agrees with the focus on the 4 key product areas of city breaks; culture and heritage; sports tourism activities and waterways; and business tourism. We would suggest that the role of Belfast in the areas of city breaks, business tourism, waterways and cruise tourism be emphasised in the corporate plan for clarity, focus and impact and to avoid any confusion or duplication. The role of local authorities in delivering on product development needs to be included/recognised and the opportunity to work in partnership with NITB on that delivery.

Belfast City Council believes that the development of city breaks, business, waterways and cruise tourism is key to the achievement of NI's growth targets and given that Belfast City Council is the key agency in the overall development, marketing and management of Belfast it would be more appropriate and accurate to state NITB's role in developing and managing city breaks and business tourism as that of leader, catalyst, enabler, facilitator and influencer rather than the lead agency.

Question 2 (c): The potential of the Republic of Ireland market as a major source of growth. (See 4.2 developing markets).

Belfast City Council agrees that ROI is a key market for NI and Belfast can be the driver of growth for this market with some focus on retail, however, the broader luxury product including boutiques on Lisburn Road, Howard/Queen Street and Bloomfield Avenue, together with the opportunity to purchase a range of art, etc must be promoted. Belfast City Council believes, however, that focus on ROI alone will not deliver the growth targets and plans for GB and Europe are key to achieving targets.

Belfast City Council would comment that 'Belfast is Northern Ireland's key gateway' (rather than page 16 – 'has the potential to be...'), and welcomes the commitment/statement of intent to support the marketing, partnership development and visitor servicing in the city, to encourage regional spread and dispersal.

Looking after the visitor – visitor information – Belfast City Council welcomes the recognition that ongoing investment is required in this field, however, it is difficult to see from the outline budgets (page 29) where provision is being made for this, particularly since it requires significant investment in order for it to be comprehensive and sustainable.

Question 2 (d): The need to offer a first class visitor experience through the range of product on offer and quality of service and standards provided. (See 4.3 delivering world class visitor experiences).

Belfast City Council supports the delivery of a world class experience to all of our visitors and welcomes the recognition that growing the evening and weekend economies will be key to achieving increased visitor spend. Belfast City Council has led on the development of the evening economy in Belfast, and this provides an excellent model which can deliver similar benefits to the rest of NI.

In addition Belfast City Council has commenced work on the provision of visitor experiences on Sundays and looks forward to working with NITB in developing and delivering on this in the next three years.

Quality and Standards - Belfast City Council agrees that quality and accreditation schemes should be developed in order to promote higher standards and consistency amongst service providers – these schemes must include visitor attractions, guides and tours.

The creation of destination management organisations may have the potential to bring business and local interest groups together to ensure high quality across the entire visitor experience; however, existing organisations may be appropriate vehicles to deliver this, rather than creating new ones. This needs to be thought through and quality scheme implementation will need financial support to ensure they are effective.

Tourism Capability and Learning - Belfast City Council supports the identification that tourism must be positioned as a premier career choice in the minds of young people and would suggest that this commences as early as from age 11. It must be supported with skills and development programmes that promote opportunity and commitment – this must include working with the industry to provide training & skills opportunities, ensuring that relevant skills are developed and that there are enough people available to work in the industry, particularly taking account of the skills gaps that exist, identified by the very recent People 1st report for DEL. Belfast City Council's has just commenced work on the HARTE project which aims to get new people into the industry over the next three years, however, there are major gaps and opportunities that need to be addressed and led by NITB which can be facilitated by the key agencies and the industry with the appropriate level of financial support. This needs to be provided for within overall revenue budgets.

Developing Businesses - Belfast City Council supports the need to excite current and potential visitors with innovation and new product and in particular showcasing our niche offerings, which in Belfast includes our luxury tourism product and our diverse cultural offering.

Belfast City Council welcomes the development of 'city passes' and 'dine around Belfast' and looks forward to working in partnership with NITB and BVCB in the delivery of these and other innovative ideas. The current work on Food Month with BVCB and also Belfast City Council's networking events which encourage business to business working and development of ie: dinner/theatre, dinner/orchestra performance, etc has gone some way to delivering this experience, however, further work will ensure greater pay off.

Section 5: 'NITB's Corporate Priorities'

Section 5 outlines the core priorities for NITB that underpin our vision to build a sustainable tourism industry that will drive the Northern Ireland economy. We welcome your feedback on the following areas:

NITB has identified its role in the context of leader, partner and influencer. (See section 5.1 – 5.4).

Question 3 (a): Are there any additional areas within these roles that you consider NITB should undertake?

NITB has, as the strategic leader of tourism in Northern Ireland, a key role as enabler, facilitator, catalyst and influencer of other organisations to achieve their individual goals which feed into the higher national goals. It is difficult for NITB to ‘manage the product’ as it does not create nor own the delivery of the product and therefore NITB’s role must be to facilitate and influence other organisations activities to achieve common goals for NI.

Likewise in relation to marketing, NITB cannot physically deliver or fund all the marketing required. By facilitating/ influencing other organisations to deliver specific marketing activities, NITB marketing budgets will go further and NITB can accelerate the possibility of achieving NI growth targets.

NITB has set out its 10 priority areas and programme of work for the next three years at the end of section 5.

Question 3 (b): Do you believe that the priorities for NITB that are set out in this plan will help build a stronger and sustainable tourism industry in Northern Ireland?

Belfast City Council believes that the priorities set out in this plan for NITB will help build a stronger and sustainable tourism industry in Northern Ireland.

Delivery Mechanisms - The role envisaged by NITB for RTPs is only possible if the RTPs are adequately funded and they can deliver marketing activities for their areas which is the hook that encourages the private sector involvement.

The role of Councils must also be recognised here because the RTPs delivery capacity is limited and councils have a statutory responsibility under the Local Government (NI) Order 1972 for the development and marketing of tourism. Belfast City Council has only outsourced marketing and visitor servicing to BVCB and BWC at this time.

Key Priorities

1) **Titanic (Maritime) Belfast**

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to continue to be an active player in the development and implementation of an

integrated tourism plan for the TSP. It also welcomes the development of a marketing communications plan for the Titanic Signature Project 2012 which BVCB will work in partnership with NITB to implement.

6) Product portfolio development and management

‘Develop, cluster, package and promote product offerings including events in line with product portfolios’ - Belfast City Council looks forward to working in partnership with NITB on this which will deliver increased revenue and length of stay for Belfast and NI.

Support implementation of an Integrated Tourism Development Plan for Belfast to be realised as a key gateway – Belfast City Council believes that NITB will not only support the implementation of an Integrated Tourism Development Plan for Belfast, but will also work with us on the development of the Plan and therefore would suggest that the ‘development and implementation’ be included in its Corporate Plan.

Develop a minimum of 2 business tourism zones for Belfast - Belfast City Council will work with NITB on the development of these zones for Belfast.

Increase discretionary conferences to Belfast - Belfast City Council will work with NITB and BVCB on increasing conferences to Belfast and would encourage NITB to assist in identifying resources from a range of agencies/sources to ensure Belfast can be in a position to bid competitively against other UK cities for international conferences.

10) Industry Development Programme

Work is already underway in partnership with NITB, BVCB, Belfast City Council and Derry Visitor and Convention Bureau on a ‘code of conduct’ for tours in NI and we would suggest that this should be included in this section, particularly since it will assist in the delivery of excellence in visitor servicing. This could possibly be the non-accommodation accreditation scheme.

Question 3 (c): How might these programmes facilitate your own business plans in order to contribute to the targets set out in the Programme for Government for tourism growth? (See Annex 2 for targets).

The key programmes for Belfast are those that relate to city breaks, conference and cruise ship development and marketing. Belfast generated 60% of NI out of state visitors and as a result

Belfast City Council looks forward to working with NITB in the development of the action plans that flow from this corporate plan that relate to the development and marketing of Belfast as a city break, cruise and business tourism destination in order to deliver Belfast's contribution to the achievement of the NI growth targets.

Question 3 (d): Can you foresee any further priorities for NITB as an organisation which have not been included in this Corporate Plan?

- Funding for Events – particularly international events as attractors
- Direct support in winning international Conferences for Northern Ireland
- Quality accreditation systems
- Promotion of tourism as a career and direct work on assisting with the gaps in skills and training within the industry.
- Building of strategic partnership/relationship with key agencies, including local authorities

The following are questions about the Corporate Plan overall and is your opportunity to add any additional comments:

Question 4: Does the plan provide you with clear information as to what NITB aims to achieve over the next three years?

Belfast City Council welcomes the 3 year corporate plan and believes it gives clarity of NITB's plans for the next 3 years. Belfast City Council would welcome the opportunity to continue the discussion created by this consultation process and to build a partnership with NITB which will ensure that there is a sharing of expertise and regular communication in both directions. We believe that we can work together to ensure Belfast is key to the achievement of NI growth targets.

Question 5: Do you believe the plan will help spread the economic and social benefits of tourism across Northern Ireland promoting equality of opportunity and a balance between rural and urban areas?

Belfast City Council believes that the growth of tourism in Belfast has not been at the expense of tourism to rural areas; rather it has been additional and therefore has increased tourism to NI.

To talk about a balance between rural and urban tourism can be misunderstood as it can create the idea that Belfast's success is not beneficial to rural areas but rather detrimental. This in turn can lead to strategies that might inhibit the growth of tourism to Belfast which will not be beneficial to NI. Rural tourism and urban tourism are complementary and success in one, benefits the other.

Question 6: Finally, do you wish to add any further comments or views on the plan?

Belfast City Council welcomes the identification of cities as a product development priority within the product portfolio and looks forward to working in partnership with NITB in developing and delivering on an outstanding visitor experience in Belfast. In addition through our gateway role we look forward to delivering visitor spread to all areas of NI.

Belfast City Council believes that it would be useful if the linkage between the government targets, corporate plan priorities and the budget allocation was clearer for example; the highlighted signature projects will not all be completed during the life of this plan and therefore will have no impact on visitor numbers or spend over the next 3 years.

Whilst signature projects should be prioritised, this should not be at the expense of addressing the lack of tangible product, ie: things that people can go and do in Belfast, and investment in this is critical. Cultural Tourism, in particular museums, galleries, festivals, events and cuisine, is still the number one motivator for European tourism and has now risen to 40% of all travel. 4.5 million in product portfolio development is too small an allocation to resolve this - after the creation of a signature project serious gaps will still exist if this is not rectified.

Key products gaps identified in NITB visitor surveys as to why Southern visitors do not come here, are either not covered or not emphasised in the report ie: Sundays, evening economy, cultural animation, summer programming. Creating products ie: music tourism, literary tourism, which reflect indigenous culture and can satisfy a 24 hour society and the experience economy – these need to be highlighted in the plan.

Overall the draft Plan does not clearly take cognisance of the Review of Public Administration which will be implemented by 2011. Albeit that this plan is up to 2011, there will be a transition period and the additional functions that will transfer to local government are important, particularly:

- **tourism** – small scale tourism accommodation development; local tourism marketing and product development; visitor servicing; providing business support; and providing advice to developers on tourism policies.
- **others** – local arts, sports and leisure; EU Rural Development Programme; spot listing of buildings; local listing of buildings of architectural and historic interest; Armagh County Museum; local water recreational facilities; local sports; functions of the NI Museum Council; local arts; local festivals; and Donaghadee Harbour.

It is essential that this is included in the Plan at this stage and the role of Councils is taken account of and included in all plans for the future development of tourism in NI.

General – strengthening of relationships and engagement with Councils as key partners is essential to the delivery of national growth targets.”

European Unit Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware of regular reports from the European Unit providing an update on Unit progress and seeking Committee approval for new activity. The following report will cover:

1. Eurocities AGM 2008
2. OPENCities Urbact II Proposal

Key Issues

1. Eurocities

Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has been an active and full member of the Eurocities network since the late 1990’s. The Council through the Director of Development and the EU Unit actively participates in the Environment, Social Affairs, Culture and Economic Development fora of the network, contributing to or leading thematic working groups, engaging in project development and delivery, and influencing the development of policy at EU level.

An example of benefit to Belfast through participation can be seen through the Culture Forum where Belfast participated in one of ten transnational projects this year with an exchange to Berlin, and from Turin, to celebrate the EU Year of Intercultural diversity. Belfast City Council's work in this project and a subsequent analysis report on learning from the project is now hailed as best practice and is profiled on the Council of Europe Website.

The Economic Development Forum provides a platform for the Council's Economic Development Unit to gather best practice in anticipation of Belfast's EU Day of the Entrepreneur to be held here in November 2008 and it also allows the Creative Industries Officer to engage currently in a Creative Clusters Working Group and address the cities on Belfast's Creative Industries strategy.

Eurocities provides a platform for engaging with counterpart officers and elected members across Europe to develop and deliver tangible projects and, importantly, influence the development of EU policy at EU Institutional level which ultimately must be adhered to by local authorities across the EU.

Further opportunities for Belfast City Council includes cooperation with the Eurocities Members to seek resources through the 2010 EU Year of Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty which is a growing issue for the Development Committee.

Eurocities 2008 AGM

The Eurocities AGM will be held in The Hague from 26-29 November 2008. Traditionally the AGM is attended by the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development (or their nominees), Director of Development, Head of Economic Initiatives and the EU Manager. The theme of this year's conference is to 'Build Active Governance' and within this there will be 5 sub-themes: living, work, well-being, environment and health, and innovation in governance. The latter is a very appropriate theme given the pending Review of Public Administration in N.I.

The conference will hold a cities awards ceremony on day one. Belfast City Council has submitted 3 proposals – 'Don't Drop it, Stop it' campaign, the Urban Arts Academy and the City Murals Project.

In conclusion, Eurocities continues to be the most essential network in terms of Belfast City Council's ongoing EU activity. The network was a source for partners in the Open Cities network and also provided the INTI Migration and Integration project for the Good Relations Unit. It provides Belfast City Council with the latest policy and funding developments and is the strongest and most relevant network for cities in Europe.

Members are asked to note the value of the Eurocities Network to Belfast City Council and approve the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair (or their nominees), Director of Development, Head of Economic Initiatives and the European Manager at the 2008 AGM in the Hague from 26-29 November 2008.

2. Urbact II OPENCities project

Members will be aware of their agreement on 21 March to lead, develop and submit a funding application under the URBACT II transnational fund. Cities can participate in the thematic URBACT networks (2008-2013) if they have benefited or continue to benefit from the Urban I and II programmes. As Members will acknowledge, the city of Belfast had benefited from Urban I (1994-1999) and currently benefits from the implementation of an Urban II programme in North Belfast worth £22 million investment. URBACT is a European Programme which aims to foster the exchange of experience among European cities and the capitalisation-dissemination of knowledge on all issues related to sustainable urban development.

Belfast City Council acts as lead city in the OPENCities project which will involve 11 cities spread throughout the EU (50% competitiveness category, 50% convergence category cities). The OPENCities project will be delivered in conjunction with two other senior partners, Madrid City Council and the British Council in Spain. OPENCities 'Towards Open Cities- Openness and the Competitive Advantage of Diversity'- explores the openness of cities in terms of attraction and retention of human capital and the social and economic integration of migrant workers.

The Urbact II programme stipulates that cities must work with their managing authority for EU funding, which in Northern Ireland's case is the Department of Finance and Personnel. DFP has formally signed up to work with Belfast City Council on this project and ultimately will involve other relevant government departments including DEL and DETI.

The three year programme also includes a 'fast track' element which means that the project has been assigned European Commission representatives from relevant Commission departments who will work with the project to identify new policy recommendations emanating from the project.

Members are asked to consider the following benefits that the programme will bring to Belfast.

1. **OPENCities has to date succeeded in Phase I of the application process providing 75,000 euros to Belfast to develop a detailed 30 month project on OPENCities. It was one of only 24 successful projects out of 400 submitted from across Europe.**
2. **It was also one of only seven projects chosen for the Fast Track element, working exclusively as the only UK project alongside the European Commission. This will give the city of Belfast immense kudos and will heighten the city profile as we directly lead the city partners to work with senior commission officials to influence new emerging policies.**
3. **The EU Commission and Parliament view the OPENCities project as the EU flagship project on migration. The cities committed to take forward this project want to identify what makes a city open and attractive to international migrants – essentially how do we define 'Open-ness'. This will look at what an open city is and how can cities develop more pro-active policies to create open cities to better attract or retain mobile international populations, which are important to both the competitive and convergence objectives of the European Union.**
4. **The project will secure over €1M for undertaking a 30 month project involving the 12 partners. The British Council will provide further funding to the project to attract other international partners that cannot be funded through EU funds.**
5. **At the end of the project, each city will have a local action plan tailored to them. The managing authority in each region (i.e. DFP), will then review the action plans to assess the provision of funding to implement the recommended activities within the plan.**
6. **Each city will also have a Local Steering Group of key stakeholders. Partners will range from employers, recruitment agencies, unions, community representatives and statutory bodies. This steering group will be a lasting legacy of the project and a permanent platform for engagement around the subject.**
7. **Each city will be able to participate in city exchange and peer reviews at an elected member, officer and stakeholder level.**
8. **The project led by Belfast City Council will be launched here in January 2009. This will be led by the Minister of Employment, Sir Reg Empey, and will attract high level politicians from the partner cities and senior policy makers from the EU institutions and DCLG.**

9. **Belfast City Council has already been profiled around this project in various publications including the Eurocities 'Inclusive Cities' newsletter and the Council has been invited to speak at the high profile Brussels Open Days in October 2008 and The Global City Forum in April 2009.**
10. **The project is the only project in Ireland addressing the issue of human migration and its impact on cities.**
11. **There is a strong North/South, East/West dimension to the project as Cardiff and Dublin are involved and it has already grabbed the attention of government departments in each jurisdiction as well as the NSMC and the Council of the Isles.**
12. **The involvement of larger cities such as Madrid and Vienna in the project will allow excellent exchange and learning possibilities for smaller cities like Belfast.**
13. **The Eurocities network interest in the project is very significant and they have established a new working group on economic migration to connect to the OPENCities project to allow for wider dissemination of the project findings to other cities.**
14. **The British Council will fund a range of cultural events to track and visualise the project including paying for a photographic record in each city and touring exhibition. As part of this the British Council will be holding an event on 23 October at the Belfast Festival looking at the issues addressed by the project. Charles Landry, a renowned author in the subject, will be chairing the debate. Belfast City Council has been asked to be a partner and speaker at the invitation only event. The Chair and Deputy Chair of Development will be invited. Members are requested to approve a contribution of £2,000 towards this event.**
15. **Main outputs of the project:**
 - **Concept papers setting out the proposed methodology to define and measure Openness**
 - **Training materials and workshops for participating partners to establish financial management, communication and audit trail process**
 - **Materials from baseline survey on OPENCities considering the factors which contribute to Openness**
 - **Guidance on local action plans and local leadership for OPENCities.**

- An OPENCities Index or Kitemark Quality Standard.
- International conferences to promote the OPENCities concept and index
- Policy recommendations on how cities can influence national and regional frameworks to support more open cities
- Local Action Plans in participating city councils, including a number of Pilot Projects proposals taken forward from these plans & to be financed by Structural Funds.
- Reports/Publications and Case Studies on OpenCities (in collaboration with EU Commission)

As members will note, the OPENCities is certainly a unique project addressing a current and growing issue for the city and NI as a whole. Members are asked to note this report and approve the attendance of Development Committee Members at the OPENCities launch in Belfast on 13 January 2009.

Resource Implications

1. Eurocities AGM

Associated costs for attendance at the Eurocities AGM in the Hague 26-29 November as follows:

Accommodation:	570 euros per person
Flights:	200 euros per person
Total:	770 euros per person

2. OPENCities

Phase One :	Belfast City Council will contribute £4,500
Phase Two:	Belfast City Council will contribute £30,000 over three years.

These amounts have already been agreed within the departmental plans.

- ##### **3. A £2,000 contribution to the British Council OPENCities event at the Belfast Festival**

Recommendations

Members are asked to –

- Approve the attendance and expenditure of all associated costs of the Chair and Deputy Chair, Director of Development, Head of Economic Initiatives and the European Manager at the Eurocities AGM 2008 (or their nominees).
- Note the anticipated benefits of the OPENCities project and agree to the attendance of Development Committee Members at the Belfast launch of the project on 13 January 2009.
- Approve £2,000 towards the British Council event on 23 October 2008.

Documents attached

None

Abbreviations

EU	–	European
AGM	–	Annual General Meeting
DFP	–	Department of Finance and Personnel
DETI	–	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
DEL	–	Department of Employment and Learning
DCLG	–	Department of Communities and Local Government
NSMC	–	North South Ministerial Council
NI	–	Northern Ireland”

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

Community Festivals Fund

The Director reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 14th May, it had agreed to:

- (i) accept a Letter of Offer from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure for funding of £77,300 for the Community Festivals Fund;
- (ii) make available in the current financial year £120,000 for the Fund, subject to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreeing to provide the finance required; and

- (iii) request that the Department increase the amount which it was providing to the Fund by £42,700 to match the Council's proposed contribution.

She advised the Committee that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 20th June, had agreed to increase from reserves the cash limits of the Development Committee by £120,000 in order to finance the Fund. In addition, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure had indicated that, whilst it was sympathetic to the Council's position, it had no surplus monies to redistribute. However, should such monies become available, the Council would have the first priority. The Director pointed out that the Council was entitled to set aside 10% of the Fund to cover the administrative costs associated with this scheme. Therefore, an amount of £177,570 would be available for distribution under the Community Festivals Fund.

She informed the Members that it was intended to commence the scheme in September with a single invitation for applications which would close on 19th September. The application would cover all events which were scheduled to take place from the earliest date for the award of grant aid, that is, 1st October, 2008 until March 2009. The funding guidelines and administrative procedures regarding the Fund had been prepared and a copy of these were set out below:

“1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Belfast City Council (BCC) has accepted the commission from the Department of Culture Arts & Leisure (DCAL) to manage the Community Festivals Fund (formerly managed by the NI Events Company) in the Belfast area. DCAL is providing £77,300 as their contribution to the fund with BCC contributing a further £120,000 with a request to DCAL that they increase their contribution to match that from the Council. The total fund value for Belfast is, accordingly, £197,300. From this, a maximum operating budget of 10% (£19,730) for administration has been set aside, leaving an amount available for distribution of £177,570.
- 1.2 In order to proceed to the full operating of the Fund, there is a need to establish detailed funding guidelines and an administrative and management procedure, in order for it to commence delivery of grants by September 2008, with a single call running until March 2009.

In order to progress to this point, approval is required by members for the:

- Recommendation of the minimum and maximum level of financial offer for community festivals;
- Establishment of CFF criteria for the council broadly based on DCAL guidelines but in line with the current Development department's strategy and strategic objectives;

- Provision of recommendations on grant delivery procedure that department needs to implement in order to effectively administer CFF having in mind the timing issue including:
 - Advertising and communication;
 - Administration;
 - Assessment;
 - Appeals;
 - Monitoring;
 - Management
 - Evaluation.
- Provision of detailed funding guidelines which should include:
 - A recommended version of guidance notes which will be passed to applicants;
 - Written terms and conditions of offer;
 - A standardised letter of offer;
 - Recommended method of assessment and weighting;
 - A template for marking of applications;
 - Recommendations on appeals procedure.
- Provision of delegated authority to administer the fund

2. ASSESSMENT OF NEED FOR SCALE OF AWARDS AND PROCESS

Recommendation for the minimum and maximum level of financial offer for community festivals

- 2.1 On the basis of the materials provided by DCAL and their specified requirement that the programme help festivals move towards self-sufficiency and sustainability by providing training to 'build capacity', and on the basis of the Council's specific requirement that the festivals as proposed meet specific criteria that contribute to the future development of the city by supporting communities and recognising that Council wishes to support as many communities as possible in their endeavour to continue to deliver existing festivals or to develop new ones, it is recommended that the upper and lower limit for awards be £10,000 and £2,500 respectively. The lower limit has been set at 25% of the upper and is recognised as the level below which it might be considered that a festival would be of insufficient scale to deliver on the capacity building requirement.

Establish CFF criteria broadly based on DCAL guidelines but in line with the current Development department's strategy and strategic objectives

2.2 Belfast City Council recognises the Fund as an investment in long-term community 'capacity building' which can most meaningfully contribute if it is aligned with the aims and objectives that guide Council as it leads and manages citywide development. Accordingly, Council has set down a series of specific 'underpinning' criteria with which applications for funding should seek to connect. Evidence of this 'connection' should be included in every proposal.

The criteria are: -

(a) Providing Leadership

- Recognising that festivals help communities come together and help them celebrate who they are and what they want their communities to become in the future.
- Recognising that effective partnerships help lead development and that community festivals can be the start point for partnerships.
- Recognising that the CFF is one way of enabling communities of place or interest to make their voices heard when it comes to policy making.

(b) Promoting Social Inclusion and Cultural and Environmental Engagement

It is recognised that local community festivals can have a positive economic impact generated not only through increasing local 'spend' but also by adding new skills and increasing enterprise within communities. They can also have a positive impact on helping to reduce division and the polarisation of communities by promoting good relations and they can increase the 'levels of confidence, participation and engagement' within communities. In so doing they can increase the capacity of citizens to make informed decisions about their neighbourhoods.

Community festivals can also help to protect and promote the city's heritage and help deliver a strong cultural experience, not only for the citizen but also for the visitor. They can also help with the creation of 'shared space'.

It is recommended that BCC welcomes applications that recognise these themes and provide a positive response to tackling them at the community level for either single or multiple communities.

(c) Animating the City (Celebration)

BCC recognises that communities have much to celebrate but often don't have the resources to make that celebration to happen. Communities might wish to:-

- celebrate their own or engage with others' cultural identity (now more important than ever as communities expand to accommodate new migrants),
- celebrate success in the arts or in sport, new infrastructure or some other development that will help the community grow
- come together to share the moment across the generations.

Celebration can contribute to community cohesion and have a positive effect on the image of the community internally and across the rest of the city; it can help promote the city as well. CFF can have a role in making that celebration happen. It is recommended that if any proposal is to attract funding, BCC will require to have demonstrated :-

- strength in depth in community engagement and participation,
- quality in the delivery of festival events and
- innovation and creativity in the way the festival meets its aims and objectives.

(d) Regeneration (Community Led)

It is established that where communities take the lead in local area regeneration everyone benefits . Festivals can be a first step in bringing communities together and building capacity (skills training and volunteering) to enable bigger regeneration issues to be tackled by the community; then they can be the means of celebrating what has been achieved. The CFF does not only see Festivals as a regeneration tool, however, festivals are worthwhile for the cultural development they provide, for their ability to enhance the use of public spaces and for the opportunity they provide for community participation and engagement. The CFF aims to recognise and support festivals for all that they might potentially deliver across Belfast.

Provide recommendations on grant delivery procedure that the department needs to implement in order to effectively administer CFF having in mind the timing issue currently impacting on fund start up

2.3 The following papers are attached in order to deliver this requirement:

-

- Notes for Guidance which cover:-
 - The Community Festivals Fund – Introduction & Background
 - Conditions and Criteria Applying to the Award of Grant
 - The CFF Applications Process

- The Evaluation/Assessment Process
 - Letter of Offer
 - Appeals Procedure
 - Monitoring & Reporting
 - Drawdown of Grant
 - Reclaim of Grant
 - Ineligible Costs
 - Advertising
- Application Form
 - Evaluation/Assessment process 'score sheet'
 - Administrative Process Map
 - Standardised Letter of Offer

Advertising and communication

2.4 The period available within which to secure bids and deliver a community festivals programme in this current year is so short that a strong promotional programme will need to be undertaken if enough/the best applications are to be secured to ensure that the funding available is fully allocated.

2.5 The following are recommended: -

- The initiation of a public relations programme around the formal launch of the Fund –targets include community media, press and broadcast media.
- An e-mail promotional campaign using BCC client lists within Arts and Culture, and Community Services
- An e-mail promotional campaign supported by BCC's various partners e.g. VSB, NICVA
- A poster campaign within BCC leisure and community centres
- Advertising in Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and Belfast Newsletter
- Web-based advertising on the BCC site and those of its community partners.

A series of 'in community clinics' by BCC staff have, in other circumstances, proven to be a worthwhile investment in promotion and might also be usefully provided as part of the general promotional programme for CFF.

Staffing

2.6 Having assessed the current workload of officers that might be involved in the delivery of the Fund, it is recommended that Council should engage an external consultant as lead assessor to manage the CFF evaluation and assessment process.

Delegated Authority

- 2.7 Under Part II of the Council's revised scheme of delegation, within subsection vi, it states that 'Where the Committee has established a scheme for the awarding of small grants (ie. up to a maximum level of £10,000) and has authorised the Chief Officer to administer the scheme, then the Chief Officer has the delegated authority to approve the allocation of the grants in line with the award criteria.' It is therefore recommended that this scheme is administered in this way, with the requirement for two outcomes/outputs reports back to committee in November 08 and March 09."

During discussion in the matter, the Director indicated that in future years it was intended that more than one invitation for applications would be organised, that groups which organised more than one festival could submit more than one application, that it was possible that the guidelines could be amended after the first year and that she would submit to a further meeting a report regarding the scheme which would be organised during 2009/2010. In connection with questions from Members regarding the employment of a consultant, the Director indicated that, due to the resignation of the Culture and Arts Manager and a member of staff being on maternity leave, the Culture and Arts Unit was understaffed and could not therefore cope with the administration of the Fund. In addition, the costs of using a consultant would result in the work associated with the Fund being carried out within the amount of money which the Council was entitled to use to administer the Fund.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed:

- (i) to adopt the criteria and guidance notes for the Fund;
- (ii) that the minimum and maximum level of grant to be offered be £2,500 and £10,000 respectively;
- (iii) that the Communications Plan for the scheme as set out in section 2.5 above be carried out;
- (iv) to delegate authority to the Director of Development under Part 2 of the Council's Scheme of Delegation to administer and award grants under the Community Festivals Fund;
- (v) to engage an external consultant as a lead assessor to manage the Fund; and
- (vi) that the guidelines and administrative procedures be reconsidered following an assessment at the conclusion of the first year of the Fund.

Events Unit Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

In October 2007 the Committee agreed to the delivery of the Council’s annual events programme. The purpose of this report is to update Members on these event activities and to request the Committee’s approval and input on a number of key items connected to the following; World Irish Dancing event, London 2012 Public Screens Programme, 2011 British Transplant Games, Support for Sport Funding Programme and the Visit of QE2 to Belfast on 4 October 2008 and The Scottish, British and European Scottish Pipe Band Championships.

Key Issues

World Irish Dancing Championships

In March 2008 the City hosted the above event, which attracted approximately 18,000 people and generated an estimated £4 million. This was the fourth time since 2000 that the Council has hosted this event with 92% of all participants and supporters coming from out-of-state. The total cost of staging this event was £101,754 with 90% of finance being allocated to Waterfront Hall operational issues.

Members are requested to approve that the Council bids for the World Championships (one year only) during the period of 2011 to 2015, and to approve an increased budget for staging the event of £200,000. The rationale for this increase is two fold

1. The bidding process now attracts significant competition from across the UK, Ireland and North America meaning that the Irish Dancing Commission will require an inducement in addition to the use of venues.
2. The competition now requires a second venue, which will increase overall staging costs.

Halloween 2008

Over the last four years the Council has staged its annual event at the Odyssey public realm. In 2007 the event attracted 25,000 people and generated £284,000 for the Belfast economy at a cost of £150,000 to the Council (a return on investment of £1.89 for every £1 of funding). The Odyssey Arena has however, informed the Council that for the 2008 event the public realm outside the Arena is not free due a concert at the venue. Members are requested to give approval that the event be staged at Clarendon Dock and Ballast

Quay. Both these sites will accommodate the significant audience that this event attracts and still allow for a major fireworks display on the night.

London 2012 Cultural Olympiad City Hand-over Event;
'Live Sites' Public Screen & Cultural Olympiad Funding

At May's Committee Members were informed of the programme connected to the London 2012 Olympics and 'live sites' public screens. The Lord Mayor has been invited to attend a special ceremony in Belfast on 24 August to mark the closing of the Beijing Olympics and the official status of London becoming the next 'Olympic City' in 2012. This will be part of a number of events in regional capitals across the country.

In addition the Council has received details on the 'Live Sites' public screens from LOCOG 2012. The proposal would see a permanent 25sq m screen, valued by the BBC and LOCOG 2012 at £750,000, positioned in Donegall Place (this is dependent upon planning approval and site allocation). The concept would mean that the BBC, LOCOG 2012 and BCC would share broadcasting time on the screen which would operate 18 hours a day, 365 days a year. The screen would also be utilised for major events including a number of London 2012 events. The key indicative costs of the proposal that BCC are asked to address are as follows:

- Planning permission and process as one off payment estimated at £6,000
- Project management for the installation of the screen £30,000
- Groundwork estimated at £35,000
- Control room space adjacent to screen estimated at £10,000
- Operating costs (annually) estimated at £17,000
- BCC Project co-ordinator (annually) estimated at £20,000
- Annual programming costs of for the next four years £60,000

In total BCC would have estimated costs of £81,000 as one-off payments and £388,000 of costs for the next four years. Should Council agree to support this initiative BCC officers would intend to offset some of these costs with DSD via their 'Streets Ahead' programme, which will see Donegall Place re-landscaped. The Committee is asked to note after the four year period that the screen would become the property of BCC with a guaranteed link to the BBC's national public screens programme. A considerable amount of clarification and negotiation with DSD and other bodies is still required before final costs are brought to Committee for consideration. In the meantime Members are asked to note this proposal.

Members will be aware that as part of London 2012's bid a parallel cultural programme has been scheduled from 2009 to 2012. This proposed programme would highlight non-sporting cultural events in the lead-up to the Olympic Games.

As part of the above processes it has become apparent that there are minimal additional resources being committed to the Cultural Olympiad 2012 by DCAL in Northern Ireland although BCC and other Councils are being actively encouraged to design and support new events as part of the Cultural Olympiad. There is clear evidence that the Arts Councils for England and Wales are receiving substantial support from DCMS.

Members are asked to agree that the Department writes to the Minister for DCAL to arrange a meeting to discuss this issue. The purpose would enable the Council to express its views on the need to provide a regional NI fund to deliver a programme of events in lead up to and during the 2012 games.

World Transplant Games 2011 and British Transplant Games 2011

In June the Council, Sport NI and representatives from the Transplant Sport UK travelled to Australia for the final stage of bidding for the 2011 World Transplant Games. Unfortunately Belfast was not successful. However Belfast has received an initial approach from Transplant Sport UK regarding the opportunity to host the British Transplant Championships in 2011. This event would bring up to 1,000 competitors from across the UK for a period of four to five days creating significant economic activity for the City. The overall budget for the British Championships would be circa £500,000 compared to a projected budget of £2,250,000 for the World Games.

Members are requested to approve further discussions with Transplant Sport UK on the possibility of hosting the British Games in Belfast.

Support for Sport Programme

A number of event applications requesting funding have now been received. These applications have been assessed by officers, based on the assessment criteria agreed at the Development Committee in March 2008. A list of these requests together with summary information and officer recommendations for funding is available on Modern.gov.

Visit of the QE2 to Belfast on the 4 October 2008

Belfast Harbour Commissioners have requested that Council assist the Port with the visit of Cunard's QE2. This will be the final United Kingdom port of call prior to the ship departing to Southampton and on to its last cruise before the vessel becomes a static attraction in Dubai. Previous visits to Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Liverpool attracted audiences in excess of 200,000. It would be the intention of the Harbour to coordinate this event so the public can both see and visit the vessel. At the time of writing this report the Council are not being asked to provide funding for the project, but BCC are being asked to commit staff from the Events Unit to assist with the visit. Whilst more details will be brought to Committee in due course, Committee are asked to note the event and to agree in principle for Council to be supportive of the Port's request.

Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association (European Championship)

On 4 August 2008 BCC's Events Unit received an 'offer to bid' letter from the Royal Scottish Pipe band Association (RSPBA) with regard to the Scottish, British and European Championships during the three year period 2010-2012. Members are requested to approve the submission of bids for the European event, as RSPBA have recommended this as the preferred option, during the three year period. Members are asked to note that all bids must be received by the RSPBA by 12 noon on 9 October 2008. The following factors surrounding the bids would need consideration:

- **Cost to stage the event:** The bid for the event would have two cost elements. The first is the RSPBA fee; this must be paid directly to the organisation. The second element of the cost would be for logistical and site requirements that the event would require. The level of the RSPBA fee would be estimated at £55,000 and the logistical costs would be an estimated at £100,000 each year during the three year period.
- **Belfast City Council Contribution.** It is suggest that Belfast City Council meet the RSPBA fee. BCC would also be asked to contribute £100,000 to the logistical costs. Members are asked to note that other sources of public funds would be sought for the logistical costs. These organisations would include the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, NITB and the Ulster Scots Agency.

- **Use of Council Land.** The event would require a space capable of catering for an audience of 25,000 people and number of Council and non-Council sites would be examined.
- **Location.** Currently both Council and non Council sites would be investigated.
- **Estimated economic impact.** These figures are difficult to give specific details on but it is estimated that between £500,000 and one million pounds would be generated over the three year period for the host city. This figure is based estimates generated by Lisburn City Council.
- **Bed nights.** These are difficult to quantify but it would be estimated that the event would fill all current bid spaces in the city

Resource Implications

Financial

- The WIDC bid would see the Council's commitment to this event increase from £100,000 to £200,000 and approval would be required in order that BCC can bid for the event during the 2011-15 period.
- Approval for the Halloween event finances at £150,000 and the Support for Sport Programme at £85,000 has been included in the Department's operational budget and approved by Committee in October 2007.
- Members are asked to note that further reports on the public screens item will be brought to Committee.
- The possible cost of staging the 2011 British Transplant Games will be identified in further discussions with Transplant Sport UK.
- There would be no cost implications at this time for the QE2 visit on the 4 October 2008
- The RSPBA bid : Members are asked to approve part one of the overall event costs. This would be £55,000 which would be paid directly to RSPBA. With regard to the second element of the additional finance of £100,000 per annum BCC's officers would be hopeful to offset some elements of these costs via Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, NITB and the Ulster Scots Agency.

Recommendations

Members are requested to approve the following:

- **World Irish Dancing Bid**: Members are requested to approve that BCC bids for one event during the years of 2011 to 2015 and that budget for staging this event, if the Council were successful with its bid for one of these years, be increased to £200,000.
- **Halloween**: Members are requested to approve the staging of the City's annual Halloween event at Clarendon Dock and Ballast Quay on 31 October 2008.
- **'Live sites' public screens**: Members are requested to note the live screens site report.
- **Cultural Olympiad**: The Department arranges a meeting with the Minister for DCAL regarding lack of funding for the 2012 Cultural Olympiad programme.
- **2011 British Transplant Games**: Members are requested to approve further discussions with Transplant Sport UK on the possibility of hosting the British Games in the city.
- **QE2 Visit**: That the Council agrees to providing help in kind support for the QE2 visit on the 4 October 2008.
- Members are requested to agree that Belfast City Council bid to stage the 2010-2012 European Scottish Pipe Band Championships.

Key to Abbreviations

BCC – Belfast City Council
BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation
DSD – Department of Social Development
DCAL – Department for Culture Arts and Leisure
DCMS – Department for Culture, Media and Sports
LOCOG 2012 – London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games 2012
WIDC – World Irish Dancing Commission
RSPBA – Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association”

Following discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the foregoing report and noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting regarding the provision of the large screen in the City Centre. In connection with the Support for Sport requests, the Committee adopted the undernoted recommendations:

<u>Organisation/Event</u>	<u>Summary of Event and Amount Requested</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Belfast Pre-Season Invitational Basketball Tournament	Funding in the sum of £10,000 in relation to the holding in September of the fifth Tournament, to which Greek and Turkish Cypriot teams as well as teams from Dublin and America had been invited	Offer support of £3,225
Northern Bank Ulster Minor Gaelic Football Tournament	Funding in the sum of £2,500 in relation to the holding over a two-month period of the Tournament which will involve one club from each of the nine counties in Ulster. All the games would be played within Belfast	Offer support of £1,800
World Championship Kickboxing	Funding in the sum of £1,000 in relation to the holding in December of a championship day of kickboxing at Ballysillan Leisure Centre	Offer support of £540
Between the Bridges Run	Funding in the sum of £10,000 in connection with the holding on 8th March, 2009 of a cross-community 10 kilometre fun-run event to promote the opening of the new Westlink. The event would take place on the Westlink and was expected to attract some 10,000 participants	Offer support of £7,200
Belfast Kickmas – The New Seven Wonders	Funding in the sum of £10,000 in relation to the holding in December at the Belfast Waterfront Hall of a two-hour kickboxing event which would include seven world title fights, which would be broadcast live	Offer support of £7,200

Broadway Junction Public Art

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Broadway Junction Art Piece project has been taken forward, since 2005, through a partnership between the Department for Regional Development (Roads Service), Belfast City Centre Regeneration Directorate (Department for Social Development), the Arts Council for Northern Ireland (ACNI) and Belfast City Council (BCC). The Roads Service is responsible for the ongoing structural work relating to the roundabout/junction which is part of the M1/Westlink improvement scheme, and the Arts Council and DSD are providing the majority of funding for the project.

The commission was awarded through an international competition and a two stage selection process. Phase 1 involved an invitation of expressions of interest from potential artists, from which seven were selected, and Phase 2 involved the shortlisted artists responding with design concepts to a detailed project brief. The BCC Artist-in-Residence consulted with community groups in the formulation of this brief.

The Development (Arts) Sub-Committee was advised on 5 October 2005 that Ed Carpenter, an American artist, had been selected by the judging panel (which included invited Community representatives) to carry out the commission.

The Development Committee of 16 November 2005 agreed Belfast City Council would take on responsibility for the future maintenance of the art piece; and at the Development Committee meeting of Wednesday 14 February 2007 it was agreed :

- That the Project Management Unit undertake the project management role up to a cost of £50K spread over the 07/08 and 08/09 financial years.
- To commit to a contribution of £20K to the capital cost of the project during the 08/09 financial year.

The construction of the Art Piece was to be coordinated within the programme for the construction of the roundabout over the M1/Westlink tunnel, which was initially due to be completed in Autumn 2009 but was subsequently brought forward to Spring 2009.

In the period since the selection of the Artist, the roles and associated responsibilities and level of financial project commitments from the project partners has been clarified.

Also within this period:

- BCC undertook an Economic Appraisal (funded by DSD) carried out by KPMG in June 2007 approved by DFP in October 2007;
- The financial contribution from DSD was confirmed as £300k;
- Further resources were secured from the ACNI to meet the shortfall in the projected budget of £400,000 (excluding in kind costs);
- Progression of the project was to include continued community engagement.

The Development Committee of Wednesday 12 December 2007, approved the terms of reference for the Broadway Junction Public Art Board and Steering Panel and agreed that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman (or their Nominees), together with one Councillor from each of the Balmoral and Lower Falls Electoral Areas, be appointed to the project Board.

Key Issues

Project Update

The Broadway Project Board met on 17 June 2008 where it was confirmed that due to a significant increase in the costs of construction materials (steel, in particular) since the commission was originally awarded in 2005, the total estimated project cost for the Trillian proposal was now at least £625,000, which is some 34% in excess of the available budget. It was therefore proposed to explore two options to secure the continuation of Trillian.

- Approach Arts & Business to seek opportunities of attracting Business sponsorship for the project;
- Request the artist to explore rescaling the Trillian sculpture in order to reduce costs.

The Broadway Project Board met again on 4 July 2008 and received an update from the artist, Ed Carpenter, who had rescaled the Trillian sculpture down by one third of the original proposal. However, this served to only reduce the overall costs by approx 10%-20% which would not be sufficient to be delivered within the available budget.

Arts and Business also reported that they had been unsuccessful with a proposal to a major city Company to provide sponsorship for the project. In the context of most business sponsorship agreements averaging out at £20k-30k, it was agreed that it was unlikely at this time that adequate business sponsorship to supplement the budget could be secured.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland advised that their financial contribution is time bound and will be required to be allocated by September '08 with a possible short extension available. Therefore, this will necessitate the project being initiated by the Autumn.

In light of the above considerations, the Project Board regrettably but unanimously agreed to abandon the current Trillan proposal from the selected artist Ed Carpenter, and to relaunch the project as a new open competition, with a fixed total budget of £400k. It also agreed that the Project's terms of reference should be reviewed to take into account the changed environment within the city over the last few years.

This new competition was advertised on 11 July '08 and 1 August 08 in the Belfast Telegraph, Newsletter, Irish News and Visual Arts Ireland. The invitation was also placed on Belfast City Council's and other various relevant websites. In addition, a press release was issued on the 18 July 2008 outlining the cancellation of Trillan and the reopening of the competition. The deadline for expressions of interest is 3pm on Friday 22 of August 2008.

It is anticipated that the project will be completed by March 09.

Resource Implications

With the construction now anticipated to follow closely after the relaunched procurement process, it is estimated that the project can still be delivered within the overall available budget of £450,000 (including in kind contributions).

This budget comprises the following amounts:

ACNI	£80,000
DSD	£300,000
BCC	£70,000 (including in kind Project Management costs)
Total Budget	£450,000

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee note the above changes to the Broadway Junction Public Art Project"

After discussion, the Committee noted the information provided in the foregoing report.

Ulster Hall Refurbishment

The Committee noted the contents of a report regarding the refurbishment of the Ulster Hall which provided information regarding the progress which was being made on the work, the interior and exterior décor, interpretative displays and the Education, Community and Heritage Outreach Programme which would be organised when the Hall was reopened.

Draft Final Community Support Plan 2008-2010

The Community Development Manager reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 14th November, 2007, it had agreed that a public consultation exercise be carried out in connection with the Draft Community Support Plan for the period 2008-2010. She reported that, following the conclusion of the exercise, the Plan had been revised slightly and pointed out that a copy of the Plan had been circulated to the Members.

After discussion, the Committee approved the contents of the Draft Final Community Support Plan 2008-2010 and agreed that it be published as soon as possible.

Strategic Neighbourhood Action Plan Update

The Committee considered a report which provided information regarding the work which the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Plan Team had undertaken since its inception sixteen months previously and the key activities which it would be carrying out in the coming months.

Several Members expressed concern at the length of time which it was taking for the Action Plan to be implemented. They pointed out that it was likely that the Plan, which would indicate how improved services could be delivered to residents, would not be finalised until 2012 by which time the Review of Public Administration would be in the process of being implemented. It was pointed out that attempts to implement the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Plan amid the changes which would result from the Review of Public Administration could cause difficulties. The view was expressed that it would be preferable if the Action Plan were to be completed before the Review of Public Administration was implemented.

After discussion, the Committee requested that a timetable for the completion of the Action Plan be submitted to the Committee's next monthly meeting.

Greater Shankill Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan

The Committee was reminded that twelve Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships were operating currently within Belfast and that they were each 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 nine such Plans and that a response had been prepared recently to the Action Plan submitted by the Greater Shankill Partnership, a copy of which had been circulated and which was available on the Modern.gov. intranet/internet site.

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

The Department for Social Development's Retail Sequencing Policy

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 11th June, it had deferred consideration of a report regarding the Department for Social Development's Retail Sequencing Policy to enable a planning advisory report entitled "Major Retail-led Redevelopment Proposals for Belfast City Centre" which had been prepared by Braniff Associates on behalf of the Council, to be circulated to the Members. The report had been prepared to assist the Committee to consider its response to a request from Westfield Shoppingtowns Limited for the Council to support the Company's proposals to bring forward the project for the extension of Castlecourt within the Department for Social Development's sequencing policy on retail regeneration in the City centre.

This report had concluded that, following the opening of Victoria Square and the construction of the Royal Exchange scheme, which had been selected by the Department as the next retail-led regeneration scheme in the City centre, it would be 2015 until a further scheme would be financially viable.

The Director informed the Committee that Westfield could extend and refurbish Castlecourt now by acquiring land privately and by submitting a planning application rather than waiting for the support of the Department for Social Development's land assembly powers. In addition, the Department had indicated that it would consider a scheme at the Castlecourt site if it represented a major change in the retail offer in the City centre.

Following discussion in the matter, the Committee agreed that a special meeting be held to enable it to be provided with an update regarding the situation and to receive presentations from Westfield, Ewatts, the developer of Royal Exchange, and the Department for Social Development.

Markets Update

St. George's Market

Vehicle Parking

The Committee noted that discussions between the Council, the market traders, and the Roads Service regarding the parking issues at the Market were still on-going.

Fish Area

The Head of Economic Initiatives advised the Members that the cleaning and powerwashing of the fish area after each day's trading had adversely affected the rear wall and that, despite regular refreshing and painting, the wall quickly became dirty again. Accordingly, hygienic plastic cladding had been fitted to the wall.

Noted.

Smithfield Market

Letting of Units

The Head of Economic Initiatives informed the Committee that only one of the units at the Market was not let currently and that it was proposed that this space could be used by local arts and crafts students and community groups as a display/showcase area. This would hopefully increase the footfall within the Market, as well as providing local artists with an opportunity to promote their work. As goods would not be sold from the unit, it would be made available at no charge. She assured the Members that should an offer be made to rent the unit, it would be vacated by the person or group which had goods on display.

The Committee agreed that the vacant unit at Smithfield Market be used as a short-term measure for display/showcase purposes by local arts and crafts students and community groups.

Advertising

The Committee noted also that information regarding the goods sold at Smithfield Market was now available on the Council's website and that a television and radio advertising programme promoting the Market had finished recently and would recommence in late August and early September.

Renewing the Routes Update and Falls Public Art

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information"

This report provides an update on the continuing implementation of projects and outlines two issues for the consideration of Committee. The update in relation to Renewing the Routes projects provides information on general progress and separate information in the form of a Bulletin covering four IDF routes.

The two issues for consideration relate to the potential provision of a Public Art piece on Falls Road and ongoing work with Roads Service. Members are asked to note the continued progress made under the Renewing the Routes programme and to consider two issues pertaining to the programme implementation.

Key Issues

Implementation Update

The implementation of IDF projects across the four principal routes covered by the funding will gather pace over the next two years. The production of a bulletin on progress will assist with this ongoing work and communication.

It is proposed that up to six bulletins are produced for the remaining period of the programme and to keep participants and partners informed of progress. The draft bulletin is attached for Consideration.

Antrim Rd and York Rd. Projects on the Antrim and York Road are continuing with additional funding made available from the URBAN II. Decorative hanging baskets and flower trees have been installed on both routes and proposals for lighting enhancements, tree planting and further commercial improvements are being developed. It is anticipated that the additional works made possible by the extra allocation will be completed by December 2008. The York Road Gateway Art Project is progressing with the architectural and engineering details being completed to finalise implementation. Installation will take place on completion of final statutory inspections.

Crumlin Road. Draft proposals have been developed for public realm schemes at Carlisle Circus, Lower Crumlin Road and Ardoyne roundabout. The initial consultations have taken place with statutory agencies and community groups and detailed public consultation is planned to begin towards the end of the summer.

Commercial improvements proposals have been developed with owners for properties at Glenbank and Lower Crumlin Road.

Falls Road 28 properties have been targeted under Phase I of the Commercial Improvement Programme in lower Falls. Construction work for phase 1 is scheduled to commence between Divis Street and Broadway in August 2008 and Phase II (Lower Springfield Road) are at final design and consultation will begin September 2008.

Hanging baskets have also been installed on Broadway as part of a three part environmental project for the route. A public art piece is also being developed with Iveagh Residents Group and the Belfast Health Trust for installation of the project on one of the Royal Victoria Hospital walls. The final element of the project will be carried out with local residents on a "Soffits and Sills" painting scheme where properties will be upgraded to contribute to the reinvigoration of this busy route.

Consultants have been appointed and are currently investigating the potential of feature lighting to popular landmarks on the Falls Road including the International Wall, Carnegie Library and St Mary's University College. Outline designs for Bog Meadows and Glen Road/Falls Road Junction are currently out to consultation and working designs have been agreed for West

Circular Roundabout and Willowbank Youth Club with construction work planned to start in September/October 2008. The listed St Comgall's railings and gates have been by specialist consultants drawing up proposals with a view of starting refurbishment works late 2008.

Shankill Road Work on this arterial route is now well underway, with 35 commercial improvements already complete under Brighter Belfast and Integrated Development Fund. A phased programme of delivery for these projects is enabling delivery and improvements to another 100 businesses over the next 12 months. Projects already delivered in partnership with other Council departments include hanging baskets as part of Belfast in Bloom, and the introduction of tourism signage at three key sites: West Kirk Church/Shankill Memorial Garden, Shankill Rest Garden and Woodvale Park. Renewing the Routes Programme has also attracted an additional £200,000 from Belfast Regeneration Office to deliver public realm improvements at two key junctions, Agnes St and Lanark Way.

Upper Springfield Road The launch of a new Panoramic Viewpoint at Monagh Road in May 08 signalled the next phase of regeneration activity in Upper Springfield and the major public realm scheme is now also complete at the Springfield Rd and Whiterock Road. In partnership with the Parks and Leisure Department, Groundwork NI and the local community are working together in this area to develop the next key project at Springhill Park 'funnel' will be developed. A further landscaping project at Whiterock Orange Hall is now at detailed design and research on land ownership and community consultation on other proposed landscaping sites is taking place to assess feasibility.

Implementation Issues

Members are asked to consider two issues pertaining to the continued successful implementation of the renewing the routes programme, including:-

Falls Public Art piece The project was included within the Renewing the Routes Plan for the Falls area as a potential commission for a significant art piece for a gateway location in the Lower Falls area, with a £80,000 budget from the Integrated Development fund.

Following further consultations a formal request to consider utilising this budget as part of a contribution to a larger art piece for west Belfast, has been received from An Nasc, a non-profit Irish language development body. The proposal is to develop a major landmark art piece, Ceiliúradh/Celebration, celebrating the Irish language and welcoming visitors into the west of the city with an overall budget of £200,000.

The group proposes that this sculpture will be the 'jewel in the crown' of West Belfast/Gaeltacht Quarter.

An Nasc has secured funding from the Arts Council's Re-Imaging programme (£50,000) and Foras na Gaeilge (£30,000) and West Belfast and Greater Shankill Enterprise Council has expressed its support for the projects. The group also have applications pending with several other bodies and they wish to avail of the Arts and Business support package. If approved the An Nasc propose to carry out the procurement of the art piece with the participation of the Council on the requisite selection panel and steering groups. The Group have also requested that the Council consider taking responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the completed piece of public art.

Members are asked to consider this request for the reallocation of this budget. Should Committee wish to consider the reallocation there are number of issues that would need to be addressed or made conditional to any approval:

- (1) That the Department of Social Development accede to reallocation of the Integrated Development Fund budget identified in the renewing the routes programme;
- (2) That the group confirm that the selection and tendering procedures would comply with the draft Council procurement policy;
- (3) That the selection panel includes Council participation comprising officer and member representation;
- (4) Confirmation that the art piece is installed in compliance with all statutory permissions, by March 2010;
- (5) The group provides confirmation of all funding availability to at least match the potential reallocation by October 2008; and
- (6) Confirmation that the site selection will ensure a direct relationship with the Falls Road within the Lower Falls area.

DRD Road Service. Members may wish to note that the successful implementation of a number of projects under the Renewing the Routes programme requires both the permission and assistance of DRD Roads Service. These projects primarily relate to the proposed enhancement of the public realm including lighting enhancement proposals. During the initial phases of the Renewing the Routes activity this permission has been difficult to attain and has been a contributing factor to delayed implementation and abortive work.

These administrative or operational challenges have been further complicated by additional issues in relation to ongoing or perceived maintenance difficulties. The procedural and detailed design approval issues have, despite ongoing work and consultations, proved difficult to overcome. This experience contrasts with the partnership approaches with other agencies and reduces the scope for the delivery of comprehensive projects.

In the broader context of RPA and the need for coordinated regeneration activity the Committee is asked to consider the merits of requesting a cross-party meeting with the Minister for Regional Development to explore how a commitment to effective partnership could be developed the implementation matters addressed.

Resource Implications

Financial:

Reallocation of an approved £80,000 funded through the Integrated Development Fund.

Recommendations

Members are consider the following recommendations:

- (1) Note the contents of the update within the report and attached bulletin
- (2) Approve the reallocation for the public art funds subject to details in respect of the aforementioned conditions being reported back to Committee and consider the request for Council to maintain the proposed art piece.
- (3) Agree to request a cross-party meeting with the Minister for Regional Development to explore how a commitment to effective partnership could be developed and the implementation matters addressed.”

In answer to a Member’s questions, the Director indicated that Council officers had expressed concern regarding the delays to a number of the projects within the Renewing the Routes Initiative and the possibility that these delays could have serious implications for the scheme.

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

Planning and Transport Related Issues

The Director referred to the report regarding Planning and Transport Related issues and indicated that she wished to withdraw from the agenda that section of the report which referred to the creation of a new post. She pointed out that this had been issued in error and apologised for this.

The Committee agreed to the Director's request and noted the contents of the remainder of the report which included information concerning the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, a further planning application for the Sprucefield Regional Shopping Centre, the review of the Regional Development Strategy and a proposal regarding the Westlink/York Street junction.

Chairman