

Development Committee

Wednesday, 10th December, 2008

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor M. Browne (Chairman); and
Councillors Attwood, Campbell, Convery, Crozier,
Cunningham, D. Dodds, Ekin, Humphrey, B. Kelly,
Kyle, Lavery, C. Maskey, P. Maskey, Rodgers and
Stoker.

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

(Councillor Humphrey, Deputy Chairman, in the Chair.)

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors W. Browne, McCarthy, and Mhic Giolla Mhín.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 11th and 12th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st December, subject to:

- (i) the omission of that portion of the minute of 12th November under the heading "Annual Events Programme for 2009/2010" referring to the Sail Training event which, at the request of Councillor McCarthy, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration; and
- (ii) the omission of that portion of the minute of 12th November under the heading "Transfer of the Management of the Former Laganside Corporation's Assets" which, at the request of Councillor Stoker, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

(Councillor M. Browne, Chairman, in the Chair.)

Annual Events Programme for 2009/2010 - Sail Training

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 12th November under the heading "Annual Events Programme for 2009/2010 – Sail Training" which had been taken back at the Council meeting on 1st December at the request of Councillor McCarthy. An extract of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

“Annual Events Programme for 2009/2010

The Head of Economic Initiatives reminded the Committee that during the previous fifteen years the Council had developed an annual programme of events. Each year these had attracted over 250,000 people to Belfast and had generated in the region of £6 million additional economic activity for the City. She informed the Members that the proposed programme of events for the 2009/2010 financial year would be as follows:

Event	Grant
.....
Sail Training	£42,250

After discussion, the Committee approved the annual events programme for 2009/2010 and its associated funding.”

Having been advised that Councillor McCarthy’s concerns regarding the Sail Training event had been resolved by officers, the Committee agreed to adhere to its decision of 12th November.

**Transfer of the Management of the Former
Laganside Corporation’s Assets**

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 12th November under the heading “Transfer of the Management of the Former Laganside Corporation’s Assets” which had been taken back at the Council meeting on 1st December at the request of Councillor Stoker. An extract of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

**“Transfer of the Management of the Former
Laganside Corporation’s Assets**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Committee will be aware that, in line with the Laganside Corporation Dissolution Order (Northern Ireland) 2006, the Laganside Corporation ceased to exist from 1st April 2007 and responsibility for all of their assets passed to the DSD from this date.

At a Special Meeting of the Development Committee on 16th May 2007 the Director of Development sought direction from the Committee on the approach the Council should adopt in considering taking responsibility for the management of the former Laganside Assets.

The Committee agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding should be developed between the Council and DSD in relation to their potential roles and responsibilities, including funding arrangements.

Key Issues

DSD are seeking the approval of BCC to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with them for an initial one year period. During this period discussions will have been completed over complete transfer of the Assets to BCC in line with the Review of Public Administration implementation.

BCC will be responsible for the implementation of five service level agreements with DSD. The five proposed service level agreements are:

- 1. The River Lagan to include the Lagan Weir also to include the operation of the river itself and looking after navigational issues. The management of the River Lagan and Weir will require the secondment of the River Manager and River Warden to BCC. A close working relationship has been established with the River Manager through the Development Department's work on the Lagan Canal Project.*
- 2. The management and maintenance of Public Realm and Public Art.
There is currently a Service Level Agreement (S.L.A.) in place, between Parks and Cemeteries Service Section, Belfast City Council and DSD for Public Realm sites and Laganside designated area. Once BCC is responsible for the management of the sites an S.L.A. would be put in place between Development Department and Parks and Cemeteries Service Section. All aspects of work currently requiring DSD approval would now be approved by Development Department who will step into the shoes of DSD. Repairs and maintenance of the public art projects generally require individual contact with the art designers as repairs and maintenance can be unique to each individual piece. Details of the contractual agreements with artists for each piece can be managed within the Development Department.*
- 3. The management and maintenance of workspace buildings.
BCC Development Department has taken part in a survey of the Cathedral Quarter Managed Workspaces as part of a review of the Managed Workspaces undertaken by BDO Stoy Hayward on behalf of DSD. DSD have a management agreement with Whelan Chartered Surveyors who provide a Property Management Service and are the link between DSD and*

the occupiers of the buildings. The Development Department's Estates resource can again take on the DSD role of responsibility for the budget/policy and strategy for the workspace buildings.

4. The management of the Lagan Lookout and Visitors Centre.

The Lagan Lookout and Visitors Centre are currently not open to the public, DSD's regeneration and planning consultants, Drivers Jonas are currently preparing a feasibility report for redevelopment of the Lookout building, increasing the size of the pontoon facility, improvements to the footbridge and the surrounding public realm. The location of the facility provides a welcome addition to the tourism product of the City centre and opens up many opportunities to be used as an educational and significant visitor attraction. The S.L.A. to be developed with DSD will have to factor in the output of the feasibility study.

5. Managing grants for Community-Based Organisations.

DSD currently has grants for events and community activities – The future administration of these grants have been factored into the Development Departments Review of Departmental Grants. Areas requiring change have been identified by the Culture and Arts Unit and as the S.L.A is progressed with DSD administration of the grant can be made to fit BCC objectives.

It is proposed that BCC Facilities Management Section will undertake work currently being contracted out by CPD Property Division through their Measured Term Contracts. Contracts are being reviewed by Development Department, Legal Services and Facilities Management Section. Specification and level of service will be agreed between DSD and BCC as the core of the S.L.A. Facilities Management are preparing a detailed list of their requirements for undertaking this work. Faults would be reported to the Development Department Laganside Team who in conjunction with Facilities Management Section would ensure that a process for dealing with repairs and maintenance is set up within BCC to provide early reporting and completion of repairs to satisfy the S.L.A.

Details of the current staffing resource within the Laganside team at DSD have been provided to BCC. This resource needs to be replicated within the Development Department, subject to the outcome of a BCC B.I.S. Review, the costs of which, based on 2007/08 salaries, are estimated to be £228,346.

Due to the specialist nature of the posts the River Manager and River Warden would be seconded to BCC until the future ownership of the assets are decided on completion of R.P.A.

It is envisaged that BCC will not manage any major infrastructure projects to the River and Weir during the interim period until completion of R.P.A.

Next steps

A draft Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared and agreed for Members consideration as an overarching agreement to take forward the transfer of the management of the Laganside Assets. A substantial amount of engagement and exchange of information has taken place between DSD and BCC. Following BCC approval the Memorandum of Understanding will be submitted to the Minister for Social Development for agreement.

Resource Implications

Financial

DSD are to pay Council a management fee in consideration of Council managing the Public Assets. The Memorandum of Undertaking provides for the Department to reimburse Council for all expenses incurred by Council as a result of managing the Public Assets.

Human Resources

Potentially five staff as detailed above to comprise a Laganside Team, subject to BCC BIS review, and the secondment of the River Manager and River Warden.

Assets and Other Implications

Ownership of the Assets would remain with DSD.

BCC would only arrange insurance for their responsibilities to be agreed under the Service Level Agreements. If as expected the Assets transfer to BCC on completion of R.P.A. consideration should now be given to how Central Government will fund major civil engineering obligations post R.P.A. i.e. from Central taxation or Local taxation.

Recommendation

Committee are asked to note the content of this report and to agree to the completion of the Memorandum of Understanding with DSD as the next step in the process of the transfer of the management of the assets to BCC.

Abbreviations

***DSD - Department for Social Development
SLA - Service Level Agreement
RPA - Review of Public Administration***

The Committee adopted the recommendation contained within the foregoing report."

Councillor Stoker informed the Committee that his main concerns were in relation to the level of funding which the Council would be receiving from the Department for Social Development in connection with the costs to be incurred in maintaining the assets of the former Laganside Corporation and the fact that the figures provided did not contain any reference to the amount which the Council would have to pay in National Insurance contributions for the staff who would be transferred from the Department for Social Development. In addition, he enquired as to whether Councillors would be permitted to sit on the various Working Groups which would be established in order to implement the service level agreements.

In response, the Head of Economic Initiatives indicated that the Council had based its financial projections on estimated figures which had been provided by the Department and that these still had to be finalised. A further report in this regard would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Following further discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided by the Head of Economic Initiatives and agreed that Elected Members be appointed to the various Working Groups which would be established in connection with the transfer to the Council of the former Laganside Corporation's assets.

Presentation by the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

At the November Development Committee Members agreed to receive a presentation from Gerry Lennon of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau on its draft Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan and to consider the Bureau's application for funding. A copy of the draft Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan 2009-2012 is available on Modern.gov.

Tourism is a major success story in Belfast, reflected by the significant growth in tourism numbers and spend; investment by the public and private sectors in the tourism infrastructure and the establishment of a strong presence on the international stage.

Key achievements include:-

Tourism to the City has more than quadrupled over the last 6 years to reach 6.9 million visitors in 2007 spending £313 million in the local economy. This included 1.4 million overnight stays of which 1.2 million were from out-of-state, an increase of 18% on the previous year.

Between 2000 and 2007 out-of-state overnight visitors grew by 144% compared to 26% in NI as a whole. Belfast accounts for nearly 60% of all out-of-state overnight trips to NI and circa 40% of out-of-state overnight spend. Up to 45% of all overnight stays in Belfast visit places outside of the City. Clearly Belfast is a draw and magnet for tourism to NI and generates substantial economic return for the wider region.

Of the 1.2 million out-of-state overall visitors, 40% were business tourists, 30% pure holiday tourism and 13% were visiting friends and relations (17% were not classified).

In 2007 Belfast secured 53 conferences equating to c.15,000 delegates generating over £7 million for the economy.

In 2008 Belfast welcomed 39 cruise ships equating to 64,000 visitors.

During 2007 the BWC, BIA TIC and GBBCA TIC handled a total of 540,000 enquiries.

2008 figures and performance analysis will not be finalised until February/March 2009. The major issue currently facing most industry sectors, including tourism, is the credit crisis and the downturn facing the global economy. Whilst there is no general consensus of opinion on what the exact impact of the credit crisis will be, industry sources suggest that the tourism sector will lose some business from overseas visitors and business travellers, and from domestic tourism spending.

The projections were set against a 2007 baseline, and reflect the following average annual increases over 2008, 2009 and 2010:

- Overnight visitors to increase by an average of 7.6% per annum;
- Total visitors to increase by an average of 4.5% per annum;

- Revenue from overnight visitors to increase by an average of 4.5% per annum; and
- Total visitor spend to increase by an average of 4.5% per annum.

In addition to these overall projections, BVCB has also set the following departmental targets for 2009:

	<u>2009</u>
<p><u>Leisure Tourism</u> To attract cruise ships to Belfast</p> <p>To implement above the line campaigns</p>	<p>41 cruise ships, 60,000 passengers & crew</p> <p>43,000 additional PHV from carrier campaigns 61% prompted recall 30% motivation to visit</p>
<p><u>Business Tourism</u> To maintain the volume and value of conferences secured by BVCB</p>	<p>45 wins 10,000 delegates this year</p>
<p><u>Communications</u> To implement the communications plans to deliver PR in main NI, ROI and GB markets</p>	<p>300 press welcomed £2.5m advertising equivalent 80m WOTS</p>
<p><u>Visitor Servicing</u> Maintain current levels of enquiries at the three TIC's</p>	<p>540,000 enquiries</p>

At the time of writing the Business Plan, actual visitor statistics for 2008 were not yet available. However, on the basis of economic projections, occupancy levels for the current year to date and Tourism Ireland's most recent forecasts for 2008, it would seem likely that actual visitor numbers and revenue will be below projections. However, until the 2008 actual statistics are released, Belfast City should maintain its original forecast for visitor numbers and revenue levels for 2010. Any revisions following the release and analysis of 2008 statistics will be made with the proviso that Belfast projections will continue to be challenging and stretching.

The focus of BVCB's integrated marketing, communications and visitor servicing plan will continue to be:

- the short break/City break markets for day visitors, overnight stays and cruises. The focus will be on maintaining the region's position and growth in Northern Ireland whilst actively targeting the Republic of Ireland, Great Britain, mainland Europe and North American direct access markets;
- the conference and business tourism market. BVCB will continue to promote the region for meetings, incentives, conferences and events, with a focus on the Association Conference Market.
- promoting Belfast's gateway role for visiting other regions in Northern Ireland and Ireland, mixing rural and urban product;
- Delivering effective and efficient visitor servicing to optimise the visitor experience through the operation of the BWC, BIA TIC and GBBCA TIC.

Financial support is being requested from the Development Committee to support the marketing and visitor servicing activities of the Bureau.

Marketing and Communications	£1,130,565
Belfast Welcome Centre	£471,505
Airport TIC's	£53,045
Domestic marketing and 'Whatabout' guide	£206,000

The achievement of the Bureau's objectives will be monitored through the establishment of benchmarking criteria, appropriate performance measurements and destination indicators which will be measured through the Belfast Tourism Monitor. Members will be aware that the Bureau undertakes additional activity including the promotion of the Council's Civic Events programme through a marketing campaign aimed at the domestic market. Furthermore the 'Whatabout' guide is produced to indicate up to date and accurate information on the events, entertainment and what's on programme for the City.

Members will be aware that the Belfast Welcome Centre has been in operation in Donegall Place since 2001 and that approval was granted to identify any future location of the Belfast Welcome Centre in order to prepare for the expiry of the current lease and the future visitor servicing and retail requirements of this gateway Tourist Information Centre. This is currently underway and a report will be brought to a future meeting of the Development Committee in 2009.

Resource Implications

£1,861,115 provided for within existing budgets

Recommendations

Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

It is recommended that Members approve:

- Funding of £1,130,565 towards the marketing activity of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau payable in two instalments – April 2009 and October 2009.
- Funding of £471,505 towards the operation of the Belfast Welcome Centre payable in 2 instalments - April 2009 and October 2009.
- Funding of £53,045 towards the operation of the International and City Airport Tourist Information Centres.
- Funding of £206,000 towards the domestic marketing campaign and the What About Guide.

Key to abbreviations

BVCB	-	Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
PHV	-	Pure Holiday Visitors
WOTS	-	Weighted Opportunity To See
TICs	-	Tourist Information Centres
BWC	-	Belfast Welcome Centre
BIA TIC	-	Belfast International Airport Tourist Information Centre
GBBCA TIC	-	George Best Belfast City Airport Tourist Information Centre”

The Committee was advised that a deputation from the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau was in attendance to address the Committee regarding its draft Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan for the period 2009-2012. Accordingly, Messrs. Gerry Lennon, Chief Executive, Ciaran Rogan, Chairman, and Paul McMahon, Board together with Ms. Fiona Ure, Communications Executive, were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

With the assistance of visual aids, Mr. Lennon provided information to the Committee regarding the numbers of visitors to Belfast during 2007 and 2008, the challenges which the Bureau was facing and its plans for the forthcoming three year period. He pointed out that, despite the deepening economic crisis, diminishing consumer confidence, the threat to global tourism and information from Tourism Ireland which had indicated that visitor numbers for the year 2008 would decrease by 3%, the Bureau was hopeful that Belfast, due to its strong visitor base and the current exchange rate between Sterling and the Euro and the American Dollar, would not suffer as badly as elsewhere. The Bureau therefore did not intend, at present, to alter its Marketing and Servicing Plan before the visitor figures for 2008 were confirmed.

Mr. Lennon concluded his presentation by requesting that the Council provide the sum of £1,861,115 to the Bureau in the forthcoming financial year. He pointed out that this represented a 10% reduction from the amount provided in the current financial year.

In response to Members' questions, Mr. Lennon assured the Committee that the targets which the Bureau had set for 2009 were realistic, although, given the current economic situation, these would be re-evaluated in future months.

The deputation then retired from the meeting.

During discussion in the matter, the Director informed the Committee that the amount of funding being requested had been included within the Revenue Estimates for the 2009/2010 year which would be presented to the Committee in January.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed, subject to the Committee's estimates being agreed, to provide funding of:

- (i) £1,130,565 towards the marketing activity of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau during the 2009/10 financial year, to be paid in two instalments;
- (ii) £471,505 towards the operation of the Belfast Welcome Centre in 2009/10, to be paid in two instalments;
- (iii) £53,045 towards the operation of the International and George Best Belfast City Airport Tourist Information Centres; and
- (iv) £206,000 towards the domestic marketing campaign and the "What About" guide.

Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre

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

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information"

At its November meeting, Committee considered a request from the Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre to extend BCC financial support agreed in 2006 in response to their 'extenuating circumstances'.

The support, which was time limited, was agreed as £14,600 per annum in each of the financial years 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Committee agreed to defer consideration of the matter to enable legal and other advice to be obtained with a view to the matter being considered further at a special meeting of the Committee.

Key Issues

**Details of officer support to Rape Crisis Centre
in response to committee**

This support was given in order to allow the RC&SAC both time and technical assistance to address the concerns raised by the Department of Health in order that they might re apply for departmental funding.

1. Officer support and access to dedicated training to address the specific financial and administrative systems deficiencies – this was through Community and Leisure finance section. RC&SAC failed to accept this indicating they felt that Council systems and financial procedures were not appropriate to their needs
2. In response to the above, RC&SAC were invited to identify an alternative source who could deliver training of a nature appropriate to their needs. BCC could then confirm the proposed training's suitability and pay for it through the requisition system.
3. RC&SAC did not identify an alternative provider. The officer therefore indicated that an appropriate amount from the £14,600.00 per annum allocation could be used towards securing relevant, financial and administrative training for the group.
4. Prior to the financial award of 2006/07, Community Development Officer support was given to address basic financial systems such as petty cash procedures, production of income and expenditure records, funding applications and organising Annual General Meetings
5. Community Services has maintained ongoing officer contact with the group, particularly around monitoring throughout the 06/07 and 07/08 financial periods. Contact was focused on the need to meet monitoring requirements, to collect information and to advise the group on how to implement improvements.
6. To assist the group to submit information in relation to the current request, unlimited access to named Community Development Worker support was offered for a period of 3 weeks i.e. 24 September to 17 October 2008

Legal Advice

The Director of Legal Services provided advice to inform the original decision taken by the Community & Leisure Sub-Committee at a meeting on 17 October 2006 in consideration of the general issue of funding to the Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre. The advice was as follows:

'where a funding application falls outside the criteria established for the relevant grant scheme then Council should normally apply the general principle that the Council as a public body in operating grant schemes must act and be seen to be acting in a manner which is objective, transparent and fair. There may however be circumstances where an application for funding is made to Council which does not fall within the criteria of any grant scheme, but which the Council might wish to support on the basis that there are special or exceptional circumstances which would justify doing so.

Accordingly, Council does have a discretion to consider applications of such a nature, but the Members must exercise particular care in coming to their decision. Prior to taking any decision, the Members should have regard to all relevant matters, including in particular the following:

1. The advice of the officers, particularly advice in relation to any adverse effects that an agreement to award funding might have on the ability of the relevant Department to operate their grant programmes in a stable and fair manner;
2. The issue of whether a decision to award funding might create a precedent for other applications which would result in the Council being placed in a difficult situation at a future date;
3. Whether any other organisation is likely to be able to plead special circumstances of the same general nature; and
4. Any other issues which might be relevant in the particular circumstances.

It is a matter for the Members to come to an informed decision, having taken all the foregoing matters into account. If the Members feel that there are exceptional or unique circumstances relating to the funding application and that the merits of agreeing to the application outweigh any potential negative difficulties, the Members have discretion to make that decision'.

At the November 2008 meeting, the Development Committee asked for further legal advice in relation to the ability of Council to provide financial or other assistance to the Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre under the following two headings:

1. Can the Council provide financial support to an organisation in a situation where its latest audited accounts demonstrate that its current liabilities significantly exceed its total assets?
2. Can the Council alternatively offer technical support to the group for the purpose of enabling its books to be audited for the last financial year in order that Council and other potential funders will then be able to make a proper assessment of its actual financial position?

The Director of Legal Service has indicated the previous advice holds and:

'it therefore follows that the Council has the power as a general principle to provide funding to the Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre provided that Members have taken into account the above listed criteria. Furthermore Legal Services have advised that the vires for the Council being able to make the grant to this group derives from the provisions of S.108 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972.

On the specific issue of whether the Council can provide funding to an organisation which appears to be in a position of insolvency, officer and legal advice would be that it would not be appropriate for the Council to put any more funding into that organisation. The rationale for that position would be that the provision of further funding to the organisation is like to be abortive in terms of achieving the Council's objectives. This advice would reflect the legal position which is clearly established by case law. Thus in relation to whether or not the Council can provide funding to this organisation in the context of its current financial position, Members should consider whether there is a realistic likelihood that the funding will assist the Council to achieve its particular objective ie the public's access to a professional counselling agency for victims of rape and sexual abuse. From the information available legal advice suggests that it would be difficult to make a further award of funding similar to that of October 2006. There may be an argument to provide a reduced amount of funding if there is a realistic prospect that financial assistance would assist with financial stability allowing the organisation to seek other funding.

In summary, there is presently no sustainable basis for the Council to accede to the Centre's request for advice funding in the amount applied for. Nevertheless if Members reasonably feel there to be a valid business case for doing so then Committee may

consider recommending some limited form of assistance to the Centre subject to there being a realistic prospect that the outcome of that assistance will be a meaningful enhancement of the Centre's current difficult position.'

Resource Implications

Given the time-limited nature of the exceptional support, no provision has been made for RCSAC in the current financial year nor in the 2009/10 estimates

Recommendations

In view of the additional information provided, the Committee is asked to respond to the request for financial support received from the Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre.

Key to Abbreviations

RC&SAC – Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre”

The Director of Legal Services spoke to the report and responded to a number of questions raised by Members. He informed the Members that, as a general rule, it would be unwise for the Council to provide funding to any organisation whose liabilities exceeded its assets to a significant extent. However, he was of the opinion that the Council could lawfully provide limited assistance to the Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre if the Members were of the view that such assistance would result in a clear and direct improvement in the Centre's position and that such assistance might take the form, for example, of helping the Centre to have a proper audit carried out in relation to its books of account for the last financial year.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was

Proposed by Councillor Crozier,
Seconded by Councillor Cunningham

That the Committee agrees:

- (a) to provide assistance, either by way of the appointment of an external auditor or by the provision of in-house expertise up to a value of £6,000, to the Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre to enable its accounts for the year 2007/2008 to be audited, subject to the organisation formally agreeing to work with the Council in the preparation of a Recovery Plan for the Centre and to the Centre agreeing to become affiliated to Advice Northern Ireland or Citizens Advice; and
- (b) should the organisation agree to these conditions, a report be submitted to the Committee at its meeting in April, 2009 on the outcome of the audit of the accounts and the Recovery Plan for the Centre, at which time the Committee will re-consider the request for further financial assistance.

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

London 2012 Cultural Olympiad - Live Sites Screen

The Committee agreed to refer to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee a report regarding the location of a live sites public screen within the grounds of the City Hall as part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

"My Neighbourhood" Debates Programme - Award of Tender

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 10th September, it had agreed that a key component of the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Plan would be the organisation of a neighbourhood engagement programme to operate between May and October, 2009. Accordingly, tenders had been sought for the undertaking of this work.

The Director reported that nine tenders had been received and these had been examined using pre-agreed criteria. Accordingly, she recommended that the most economically advantageous tender received, that submitted by Blueprint Development Consultancy, Ormeau Business Park, Belfast, in the sum of £84,900, be accepted.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Neighbourhood Renewal

The Director reminded the Committee that, in 2003, the Department for Social Development had produced a Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy entitled "People and Place", which aimed to tackle deprivation within the most disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland. As a result, twelve Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships had been established in Belfast. She reminded the Committee further that, since 2007, the Development Department's Strategic Neighbourhood Action Plan Team had been responsible of the co-ordination of neighbourhood renewal for the Council. Since that date, the Team had provided considerable support to the Partnerships including:

- (i) preparing co-ordinated responses to each of the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans. These had resulted in the Council being identified as having a lead or supporting role in over 500 service delivery actions at a neighbourhood level;
- (ii) creating a neighbourhood renewal database which detailed all of the key actions and implications for the Council;
- (iii) appointing two Neighbourhood Development Officers to co-ordinate the delivery of proposals contained within the Action Plans;
- (iv) securing a commitment to deliver on neighbourhood renewal within the Council's Corporate Plan; and
- (v) profiling Council service delivery within each Neighbourhood Renewal Area.

The Director pointed out that the Council acting alone could not deliver on all of the proposals within the Action Plans, since other organisations had been requested to assist in the undertaking of a number of them. There was, therefore, a need for the Council to work in partnership with a range of organisations in order to ensure that neighbourhood renewal was delivered successfully.

She advised the Members that over recent months discussions had been held with the Belfast Regeneration Office on a wide range of issues, including Neighbourhood Renewal, its synergies with the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Plan and the potential to commence a pilot scheme whereby both organisations could deliver services in a more integrated manner and apply the lessons learned to future Action Plans. Following these discussions, the Belfast Regeneration Office had suggested that the Lenadoon Neighbourhood Renewal Area be considered as a suitable location for a joint pilot scheme to test joined-up activities in the short, medium and long term. She pointed out that a report on the progress of this project would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee. She assured the Members that, whilst the work on the Lenadoon Area scheme was being developed, the Council would continue its work on the twelve Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans.

Several Members expressed concern at the length of time it had taken for the Department for Social Development to agree to participate in a pilot scheme and expressed the view that one pilot area was insufficient.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided, agreed that the Council officers explore with the Belfast Regeneration Office the use of the Lenadoon Neighbourhood Renewal Area as a potential pilot area for joint working and agreed further that the Belfast Regeneration Office be informed that the Committee wished for more such pilot schemes to be developed as soon as possible.

Outer East Development

(Mr. J. Nelson, Community Services Area Manager (East), attended in connection with this item.)

The Community Development Manager advised the Committee that, in 2007, the Council and the East Belfast Community Development Agency had initiated a pilot community improvement scheme in the Sydenham area, which was an area of weak infrastructure but was located outside the established Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. This had resulted in the formation of the Sydenham Working Group involving representatives from the Statutory, Community and Church organisations within that area of the City. The scheme had been supported under the Department for Social Development's Areas at Risk Scheme and had resulted in major community development work being undertaken to improve the area.

As a result of the success of this pilot scheme, the Council and the Development Agency were proposing to undertake development work in four other areas of East Belfast, namely Ardarn, Bloomfield, Clarawood and Knocknagoney, which, like Sydenham, had weak community infrastructure and were not located within a Neighbourhood Renewal Area. She pointed out that, whilst a number of groups were undertaking community development work in these areas, no cohesive or co-ordinated approach was being followed and that only the East Belfast Community Development Agency had the capacity to undertake the work in this area of the City.

She advised the Committee that this project would last for approximately eighteen months, would cost £29,800 across the four locations and that the major aspects of the scheme would be set out in a development partnership agreement between the Council and the Agency.

Approved.

Community Project Grants

Councillor Crozier declared an interest in this item, in that a group with which he was associated had been awarded financial assistance under this scheme, and took no part in the discussion.

The Community Development Manager reminded the Committee that Community Development Project Grants were awarded to organisations which supported and strengthened local efforts to enhance and improve the quality of life within a neighbourhood or area. The maximum amount which could be awarded under this scheme was £500. She indicated that the maximum amount which could be awarded to a Community Group under the authority delegated currently to the Director of Development in any one financial year was £500. In previous years, in order to permit applications received under the Christmas Community Chest, which enabled organisations to hold events during the Christmas period for local residents, to be processed using this delegated authority the former Client Services Committee had approved the payment of Community Development Project Grants. This was now the responsibility of the Development Committee and it would be necessary, therefore, for it to approve the payment of grants.

She reported that forty-four Project Grant applications had been received, thirty-six of which had been recommended for grant-aid and it was proposed that a total of £18,000 be allocated in this regard.

The Committee considered the applications which had been received, noted that the assistance to the Small Step Adult Education Group was subject to specific assurances being received and agreed to adopt the recommendations as indicated below:

Recommendations for Grant Approval

Group Name	Requested	Recommended
NORTH		
Ardoyne Focus Group	£550	£500
Club Oige Mhachaire Bothain	£600	£500
Docksiders Senior Mens Group	£500	£500
Donegall Park Avenue Seniors	£500	£500
Friends of Clifton House	£500	£500
Jennymount Community Association	£500	£500
Midland Art Club	£500	£500
Midland Seniors Citizens Club	£500	£500
North Belfast Cultural Society	£500	£500
Shared History Interpretive Project	£500	£500

Group Name	Requested	Recommended
Small Steps Adult Education Group	£500	£500
St. Mary's Ladies Group	£500	£500
St. Silas Senior Citizens Club	£500	£500
Time 4 U	£500	£500
Womens Arts & Crafts	£500	£500
St. Kevins Senior Citizens Group	£500	£500
Sub Total	£8,150	£8,000
SOUTH		
An Droichead	£500	£500
Men Utd	£500	£500
Womens Information Group	£500	£500
Sub Total	£1,500	£1,500
EAST		
East Belfast Community Health Workers	£500	£500
Sub Total	£500	£500
WEST		
An Munia Tober (Childrens)	£500	£500
An Munia Tober (Afterschools)	£500	£500
An Munia Tober (Health Outreach)	£500	£500
Blackie Community Groups Association	£500	£500
Conway Senior Citizens	£500	£500
Corpus Christi Services	£650	£500
Falls Womens Centre	£500	£500
Greater Shankill Senior Citizens Forum	£500	£500
Habinteg Pensioners Group	£500	£500
Hannahstown Seniors Group	£500	£500
Hannahstown Community Ass	£800	£500
Highfield Mother & Toddlers	£500	£500
Tearman Fold Tenants Association	£500	£500
Townsend Street Lunch Club	£500	£500
Upper Springfield Development Company	£500	£500
Upper Springfield Community Health Workers	£500	£500
Sub Total	£8,450	£8,000
TOTAL	£18,600	£18,000

Recommendations for Grant Refusal

Group Name	Request	Reason for Refusal
NORTH		
		No Evidence of Financial
		No Systems or AGM.

Group Name	Request	Reason for Refusal
NORTH		
The Hub Community Resource Centre	£500	Declaration of Compliance
Whitewell Transformation Project	£500	Application Withdrawn
SOUTH		
Retired Senior Volunteer Programme	£500	Incomplete Application
WEST		
West Belfast Senior Citizens Forum	£500	Application Withdrawn

Ligoniel Community Centre - Licence Agreement

The Community Development Manager informed the Committee that the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust had requested that Glenbrook Surestart be permitted to use the minor hall at the Ligoniel Community Centre, which was directly-managed by the Council, on a regular sessional basis between 9.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. Monday to Friday for a period of three years commencing in February 2009 and had requested the exclusive use of a store located in the hall in order to provide child developmental programme for two year olds from the greater Ligoniel area. She pointed out that Glenbrook Surestart was a Government funded initiative which worked with parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of pre-school children.

She advised the Members that part of the request would require the Council to carry out specified adaptation works to facilitate Glenbrook Surestart which would be funded through the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and any costs incurred would be reimbursed to the Council on completion of the work. In addition, it was possible that further additional minor adaptations to the exterior of the Centre might have to be undertaken and that a similar arrangement regarding the payment for this work would be made.

The Community Development Manager informed the Members that a Licence Agreement would be completed in order to formalise this arrangement, which was essentially a block booking of facilities at the Ligoniel Community Centre for a three year period. The Agreement would cover the times the organisation would be using the Centre, which could be varied by the Council, and would indicate the hire charges which would be assessed annually. Payment for the exclusive use of the storage facility would be additional to these charges and would be fixed probably for the three year period. The Agreement would also provide for the transfer of funds in relation to the completed adaptation works and the provision for the recovery of the costs of reinstatement in regard to these works, if subsequently required by the Council. She pointed out that the costs of the internal adaptation work had been estimated at £13,000 and, based on current rates, it was anticipated that the hire charges for the use of the Centre would be in the region of £37 per week, whilst costs for the store usage had still to be calculated.

Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee agree to the request from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the associated expenditure as outlined, subject to the completion of the Licence Agreement to be prepared by the Director of Legal Services, on the understanding that the costs of the adaptation work would be reimbursed to the Council.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Economic Development

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Belfast City Centre Management

BCCM are currently working on their business plan for the financial year 2009-2010 and have asked for an opportunity to present their draft proposals to Members at an upcoming meeting of the Development Committee.

World Trade Centre Belfast Business Plan

Belfast City Council acquired the World Trade Centre Belfast licence in 2002 in partnership with Multi Development. In 2007, the Council purchased back Multi Development’s 50% of the licence. Since the appointment of the WTC Officer in March 2007, work has been undertaken to develop WTC Belfast activities. This has included a WTC Belfast Export Excellence Seminar Series for local companies this year as well as managing inward investment activities. To determine the longer term plans for WTC Belfast services, a business plan has been developed.

Employability support

Members will be aware that, at the Development Committee meeting of 8 May 2008, the findings of two major elements of research on employability issues and skills were presented for information. Since completion of the research, work has continued with key partners to consider how the issues identified might be addressed.

Crescent Fair

At the September meeting of the Development Committee, Members agreed to support a range of activities to promote the development of the independent retail sector in the City. South Belfast Partnership is currently planning to hold a one-day festival which will offer an opportunity for local artists and art students to promote their designs by holding a fair at Crescent Open Space.

Key Issues

Belfast City Centre Management

Belfast City Centre Management is undertaking a number of initiatives aimed at improving the environment and the retail offering within the City centre area. Following a successful year, BCCM are now considering a range of new initiatives as well as further development of existing activity and have asked for an opportunity to present this to the Development Committee.

World Trade Centre Belfast

The strategies outlined by Programme for Government, DETI and Invest NI emphasise the need to support more companies to become exporters. Invest NI currently supports approximately only 5% of local companies and one of their priorities is to attract more client companies. The WTC business plan highlights the trade barriers and needs of local companies, the current assistance available and gaps in provision which WTC Belfast can fill. The business plan also details the commercial opportunities for WTC Belfast to secure income in order to secure the sustainability and growth of the service activities.

It proposes the following services:

- WTC Belfast Membership – target of 200 member companies established
- WTC Global Skills Workshops – introducing companies to the practicalities of trading internationally
- WTC Belfast Trade Missions – linking in with current providers (NICCI, Invest NI), we will undertake a small number of trade missions to target markets
- WTC Global Supply Chain Management Programmes – helping companies improve their global supply chain management by looking at how they buy, sell or make products internationally
- WTC Belfast Local Networking Events – series of breakfast events on key topics of interest to local businesses
- WTC Belfast Investor Gateway Service – promoting Belfast as a city in which to invest and do business, linking with the key public and private sector agencies that can support potential investors.

WTC Belfast will adopt the following principles in terms of service delivery:

- Commercial approach: Services will be charged and income generated
- Regional approach: Membership and services will be offered to companies both regionally and internationally in cases where income can be generated or potential investment can be brought to the City. A regional approach also serves to attract co-funding for projects delivered on behalf of other organisations such as Invest NI. Participation costs by companies located outside of Belfast will be higher than those for Belfast businesses.
- Partnership approach: WTC Belfast will work in partnership with other local delivery organisations as well as the wider WTC network.

Further details on the proposed activities can be found on Modern.gov.

Employability Support

The employability research undertaken identified the need for a strategy on skills and employability at a Belfast level. The strategy should address the central problem that, whilst the number of jobs in the City has (or had) been growing, the number of Belfast residents in work had not shared in this growth. Equally, if Belfast is to climb the value chain in terms of employment, it needs to consider the skills implications and promote graduate retention levels in the City.

Since the completion of this work, it is clear that the economic picture has changed. Redundancy levels are increasing and the number and nature of people seeking employment is different from what existed in the past.

While discussions with key stakeholders around the strategic issues affecting skills and employability in Belfast will progress in the coming months, it is proposed that some short-term interventions are undertaken with those who are already or who risk becoming unemployed. These individuals may not qualify for statutory benefits. Equally, they may be pre-disposed to working and therefore are likely to be keen to get back into employment as soon as possible. Support required may be around skills transfer issues, consideration of 'interim' employment in a different sector, liaison with employers to identify upcoming opportunities and skills

requirements as well as some forecasting work on future employment sectors and skills needs. This work could use the brand that 'Belfast is working' and would demonstrate the fact Belfast City Council is taking a proactive approach to addressing the effect of the economic downturn on employment in the City.

Crescent Fair

South Belfast Partnership has been successful in attracting funding under the Community Festivals Fund to organise a community festival which will feature, for the first time, a fair which will allow local artists and designers to showcase their products. The Partnership is currently seeking additional support in order to encourage new traders to sell at the fair for the first time and to ensure that the appropriate display equipment and materials are used. The funding will also be used to help students sell their designs at the event by carrying out preparation and development work with them in advance of the event.

Resource Implications

Belfast City Centre Management

No resource implications.

World Trade Centre Belfast

The cost to deliver the identified services for the period January 2009 – March 2010 will be £160,000. The budget for operations in the financial year 2008-2009 (£60,000) was approved as part of the Departmental Plan in May 2008; £100,000 will be required for the financial year 2009-2010. An application was submitted to DETI for 50% funding for WTC Belfast activities for this period and this has been approved. Invest NI have also agreed to co-fund the first WTC Belfast trade mission to Doha, Qatar. Further opportunities for private sector sponsorship will be explored.

Employability Support

No additional financial commitment required – budget approved under 'Job readiness programme for local unemployed citizens' as part of Departmental Plan approved by Development Committee in May 2008.

Crescent Market

£4,000 additional support required to attract additional traders to the event. This funding was approved as part of the independent retail support plan for 2008-2009 which was approved at the September meeting of the Development Committee.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- Agree to receive a presentation from BCCM at an upcoming meeting of the Development Committee
- Agree the proposed activities to be delivered as part of the World Trade Centre Belfast activity plan for the period 2009-2010 and approve a budget of £100,000 for activities to be undertaken in the financial year 2009-2010
- Note the proposal to work with key partners on a Belfast Skills and Employment strategy and endorse a programme of targeted interventions to help people recently unemployed or at risk of becoming unemployed back into the labour market.
- Approve the allocation of £4,000 towards the organisation of a fair at Crescent Open Space on 28 March 2009 (budget already approved by Development Committee in September 2008 as part of Council's contribution to support for independent retail in the City)

Key to Abbreviations

BCCM – Belfast City Centre Management
WTC – World Trade Centre”

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations contained within the report.

Belfast City Council Transport Policy Review

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Consultants were commissioned in August 2008 to update the current Belfast City Council Transport Policy. The purpose of the commission is to:

- Carry out a review of the existing Transport Policy and ‘Environmental Policy Package’ in order to provide the Council with an up to date transport vision for the city and to support the Council’s civic leadership role of facilitating the development of sustainable transport options for the City.

- modify the existing 'Environmental Policy Package' in order to take account of the Council's workplace and fleet transport requirements and to identify linkages with other corporate objectives. The review will include a detailed overview of Belfast City Council's transport activities with the objective of establishing the potential for a range of more sustainable transport options for operational activity, staff and fleet vehicles.

Continued engagement in the processes that shape the growth and development of the city requires the Council to be fully informed of current best practice in transport policy in order to participate in the proposed consultations and influence transport initiatives planned for the city. The ability to effectively participate in the proposed review of the Regional Transport Strategy will be an essential element of the approach to ensuring the sustainable development of the city and region. In addition the proposals for the Review of Public Administration with the proposed transfer of responsibility for local planning functions reinforces the need for the Council to have a consistent and coherent transport policy to ensure integration of land use and transportation issues within Belfast.

Key Issues

The initial work on the review of the transport policy has completed 3 Stages covering the following activities:

Stage 1

A technical review of the current transport policy.

Stage 2

- Identification of effective approaches to sustainable transport in comparable cities;
- A review of current and proposed transport initiatives for Belfast; and
- Consultation workshops with elected members, internal officers and external representatives.

Stage 3

- A review of Belfast City Council staff and fleet transport activities;
- Internal Staff travel survey; and
- Identification of initiatives from workplace travel planning in comparable local authorities.

The main findings from Stage 1 to 3 were that:

- The technical review showed that the current policy provided the Council with a coherent approach to lobby on sustainable transport issues, input into the formulation of the BMTP, BMAP and the development of the Belfast City Council Air Quality Action plan.
- The revised transport policy should set out a clear transport vision for Belfast feeding into the current review of the RDS and the proposed review of the RTS and BMTP.
- A review of best practice highlighted the potential for consideration of new initiatives such as 'Shared spaces' and 'low emission zones' which are being implemented in a number of European cities.
- The Review of Public Administration and the transfer of functions will have significant implications as the transfer of road functions is relatively limited as the main statutory responsibility will remain largely with central government although through local planning the Council will have the opportunity to influence the development of more sustainable transport system in Belfast
- Consultation with elected members and other bodies indicated the following:
 - The need for a strong and aspirational transportation vision for the city
 - The need for the integration of transport planning and land use planning to support sustainable development and to provide clearer guidelines on the issue of developer contributions
 - Continued support for a rapid transit scheme with some stakeholders strongly supporting the light rail option
 - Integrated ticketing for the city and night time services to assist the evening economy
 - The need to include transportation policies that address issues with the elderly, school children, areas of high unemployment and low income, community severance and connectivity
- The initial internal staff and fleet review indicated that:
 - a significant portion of employees currently have a high level of accessibility to public transport;
 - the private car remained the dominant mode for travel to work for staff;

- the necessity for access to transport for business purposes during their working day and the fact it was currently more efficient to use the car than public transport;
- the potential exists for discount travel cards/ season tickets as well as the availability of more frequent and direct bus services to increase public transport use;
- concerted effort has been made to reduce the environmental impact associated with fleet activities and in this regard the Council is seen as an leader and proponent of best practice;
- initiatives such as the replacement and upgrade of vehicles to meet Euro emissions standards, the promotion of the use of cleaner vehicle technology, the cycle to work initiative and membership of Travelwise NI Car sharing scheme have made positive contributions; and
- the development of a formal Council Travel plan would enable the initial activity to be embedded in the work of the Council.

A full summary of the Stage 1, 2 and 3 reports is available on Modern.gov. The consultants will now consider as part of Stage 4 the potential for the “Environmental Policy Package” to be refined and developed as to provide the Council with an up to date transport vision for the city.

Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report although the review will consider the issue of potential future resource requirements in respect of the internal transport policy implementation, review and monitoring.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note:

1. the findings of Stage 1, 2 & 3 of the Belfast City Council Transport Policy review; and
2. the opportunity for further consultation with the different parties in respect of the draft proposals prior to a further report to the Committee on the final approach and recommendations.”

The Committee adopted the foregoing recommendations.

Sprucefield Centre Limited Planning Application

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Sprucefield Centre Ltd submitted a revised application for a significant retail development (including John Lewis Partnership) at Sprucefield in August 2008. The current proposed scheme will comprise:

- **John Lewis Department Store of 22,300 m² (covering four floors);**
- **19 individual retail units with a total area of 22,500 m² (no more than four of the units to be less than 250 m² and the majority more than 500 m²);**
- **7 food units totalling 1,580 m²;**

There is little difference in the size of the proposed development when considered against the previous application, submitted in June 2004. The 2004 application comprised: a JLP Department Store of 20,656 m² and 29 retail units (22,548 m²). The most significant change to the proposal is the reduction in the number of the proposed retail units with unspecified occupiers from 29 to 19 units, although it should be noted that there is no change in the actual retail area.

The history of the most recent application is summarised below:

- **The Council with several other objectors lodged objections to the original planning application to develop a John Lewis Department Store and 29 additional shop units at Sprucefield. The objections were based on the fact that the application ran contrary to both the current and proposed planning policy and was likely to damage the retail-led regeneration of Belfast and other adjoining centres.**
- **On 1 June 2005, the then Environment Minister Lord Rooker announced his intention to grant planning permission for the 2004 Sprucefield retail application under the provisions of Article 31 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991. Under the provisions of Article 31 the DOE has three options, issue a notice of opinion to refuse, issue a notice of opinion to approve or call a Public Inquiry by the Planning Appeals Commission. In this instance the decision by the Environment Minister Lord Rooker was to issue a notice of opinion to approve.**

- The Council with other objectors challenged the process and Ministerial decision through judicial review proceedings. This challenge was successful with the ruling stating that the Ministerial decision to approve the application was made without recourse to a Local Inquiry and against the advice of his professional advisors.
- Sprucefield Centre Ltd subsequently resubmitted the application for the proposed John Lewis Store and 29 additional retail units and, on 27 March 2007, the new Environment Minister David Cairns again announced his intention to grant planning permission. Leave was again granted for a number of objectors including Belfast City Council to have the Minister's intention to approve the scheme judicially reviewed. In light of the announcement that the Minister was minded to approve the application against the advice of Planning Service, Sprucefield Centre Ltd withdrew the application in July 2007.
- At the time of withdrawal Sprucefield Centre Ltd stated that they would enter into pre-application with Planning Service on a revised scheme. The planning application for the revised scheme was submitted August 2008 with the adjoining retail units reduced in number from 29 to 19, as outlined above.

The Council, during the BMAP Public inquiry, strongly supported Draft BMAP policy R4 "Sprucefield Regional Shopping Centre" which stated that planning permission would only be granted for retail development which would not adversely impact on the vitality and viability of existing City and Town Centres and restricted the type of goods to be sold to bulky comparison goods. The Council counter objected to the representations that sought to change or weaken the provisions of Policy R4 and participated at the public inquiry on that basis.

Key Issues

The options for the consideration of the current planning application and the utilisation of Article 31 remain unaltered, albeit that the responsibility for the decision rest with an Assembly Minister. The application is again likely to be considered under the provisions set out in Article 31 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991, by virtue of the scale and impact. Whilst confirmation of the approach has yet to be published it is anticipated that the application will go to a Public Inquiry as the previous reliance solely on the Ministerial decision to issue a notice of opinion was successfully challenged.

The minor modification of the development proposal does not address the principal concerns in relation to the potentially adverse impacts on general retail policy and the surrounding traditional retail centres. It should also be noted that there could, in the current economic climate, be a potential greater adverse impact on the surrounding centres as the projected levels of expenditure are reduced. The total retail area of the latest proposal remains broadly similar to the 2004 and 2007 applications at around 45,000 m². The principal modifications relate to the changes to the unspecified new retail units which have increased in size but reduced in number.

The Committee may wish to consider whether these minor amendments to what would be a significant expansion of the Sprucefield Centre, to accommodate the John Lewis Development and adjoining retail units, requires any modification of the Council's currently adopted position. The Council, as outlined above, objected to the previous applications, the two Ministerial decisions approving the applications and was a counter objector in respect of representations to modify or weaken the Draft BMAP policy for Sprucefield at the recent Public Inquiry.

However, in recognition of the clearly identified adverse implications for the retail core of Belfast and the surrounding city and town centres and retail policy generally it is suggested that the Council maintains the previously adopted positions both in respect of the objection to the application and the recommendation that the proposed development be subject to a Local Inquiry.

In respect of the level of engagement in any formal processes relating to the determination of the application it should be noted that the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce and independent Belfast retailers, along with a number of other objectors within the wider region, have indicated that they will be pursuing objections to the current Sprucefield Centre Ltd application. Correspondence has been received from the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce requesting an opportunity to address the Committee and outline their concerns in respect of the proposed development and the potential impacts of the Sprucefield Centre Ltd proposals. The Chamber may also wish to take the opportunity to explore the potential for the development of similar working arrangements to those previously adopted whereby objectors shared a coordinated approach to the participation in any future public inquiry to reduce the potential cost of such an action.

Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- accede to the request from the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce for an opportunity to address the Committee on concerns in relation to the Sprucefield Centre Ltd application,
- maintain the previously adopted positions and approve the submission of an objection to the proposed development at Sprucefield including a recommendation that the proposed development be subject to a Local Inquiry.”

During discussion in the matter, several Members expressed the view that, given the current economic situation and without having heard the views of the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, it would be unwise for the Committee, at this stage, to maintain its previously agreed position regarding the Sprucefield planning application. Accordingly, the Committee agreed to receive a deputation from the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce at a future meeting and to reconsider, after that presentation had been heard, its position regarding the proposed development at Sprucefield.

Test Drive the Arts - Audiences Northern Ireland

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Audience NI is the Audience Development Agency for Northern Ireland, with mission to ‘enable Arts and Cultural organisations to diversify audiences for the arts’. Test Drive the Arts is a means of breaking down barriers to attendance in the Arts. It encourages people to experience an aspect of the arts for the first time with aim of bringing in new audiences and diversifying attendance in the arts. The scheme uses unsold capacity in arts venues and offers unsold tickets, free of charge, to specially targeted non-attenders. Tickets are offered at no cost to the project by participating venues. The scheme was intended to develop a longer term relationship with the new attendees with follow-up offers, a personalised approach and after sales service. This model supports the development of a lasting relationship with the new audience.

Members will be aware, a pilot Test Drive the Arts Initiative was approved as part of the Celebrate Belfast programme funded by the Millennium Commission at the Development Committee 17 August 2005. Audiences NI administered all external elements of the project and co-ordinated a centralised database from which non-attenders were targeted and relationships managed. The original scheme was

modelled on similar schemes operating in Manchester and elsewhere which enabled members of the public with a Belfast postcode to be eligible. Subsequently, Audiences NI completed a programme which included the production of a Classical Arts NI database to ensure that beneficiaries were new and not previous attenders.

This work aimed to build on research work undertaken by Audiences NI, in partnership with the Council, to examine attendance based on Super Output Areas developed by NISRA, and the MOSAIC NI analysis, which characterises households by demographic, lifestyle and targeted areas of geographical proximity to the venues and within the top 10% of the most deprived areas (as identified through the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure and representing a range of areas across the city).

This initiative represented the first time that Belfast household's were selected in this way, to target areas of low penetration of arts attendance and was intended to inform the development of 'barriers to access' strategies, which target areas of high deprivation and promote access to the arts. The pilot project was extremely successful establishing a baseline that represented a spread of geographic/wards in the Belfast region. A full report on the outputs is available on Modern.gov.

Key Issues

A revised programme, delivered and managed through Audience NI would present a modified model 'Test Drive the arts NI Online' a web-based initiative, is proposed to be delivered in 2009-2011. The Aims & Objectives of the proposed 'Test Drive the Arts NI Online' is available on Modern.gov.

Within the Integrated Cultural Strategy (ICS) under Strategic Leadership, Aim 1.2 council has agreed to provide and support creative responses to the social and political challenges in the city. A revised programme 'Test Drive the Arts NI Online' fits well with this aim and in particular with an objective to enhance opportunities for cultural engagement to enable greater levels of social inclusion, community development and inter-community contact. It also fits appropriately within Quality of Life, Aim 3.1 under objectives to make culture more accessible and to grow audiences and support web-based integration to improve audience access to culture and arts information to ticketing, as well as Aim 3.5 to build audience intelligence to identify target audiences which reduce barriers to access to arts and heritage activity and develop a pilot programme.

In addition, within the aims and objectives outlined above, it is pertinent that a programme of this nature is both relevant and timely in a climate of economic downturn. The proposed project will enable Council and arts organisations to take a pro-active position in terms of maximising attendances that will give value to the public and funders.

Within the ICS, Council's two main strategic partners are the Department of Culture Arts and leisure (DCAL) and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI). It is within this context that this initiative demonstrates an excellent potential to promote and enable a collaborative approach to audience development and establish a shared area of work. ACNI has agreed, in principle, to match fund that contribution of Belfast City Council, to enable the proposed Test Drive the Arts Online NI to go forward.

The proposed programme will require a total funding package of £120,000 over a two year period. In respect of this, it is proposed that Members agree a 2 year service level agreement with Audience NI to enable this audience diversification programme be progressed, on the basis that ACNI match fund any level of contribution by Belfast City Council.

Resource Implications

Financial

Within the department's draft revenue estimates, 2009/10, Council has proposed £30,000 for the Test Drive The Arts Online initiative.

Human Resources

This is part of the ongoing programme of work of the Culture and Arts Unit.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members approve a two year Service Level Agreement with Audience NI to deliver 'Test Drive The Arts NI Online', to the level of £30,000 per annum, on the basis that ACNI match fund the initiative."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Development and Outreach Initiative 2009-2010

The Director of Development reminded the Members that the Council's Development and Outreach Initiative Grants were intended to build capacity and boost cultural activity in communities with weak cultural and arts infrastructure in areas of multiple deprivation. Groups benefiting must either have a disability focus or be based within one or more of the designated Super Output Areas in Belfast. She reminded the

Committee further that, having been piloted by the Council in 2002, the Initiative had subsequently been revised and was open to collaborative partnerships of community organisations and arts/heritage organisations and she outlined the relevant criteria and amount of funding which was available.

During the current financial year, twenty-eight applications for assistance had been received, thirteen of which had been funded. She informed the Members that information sessions regarding the Initiative would be held across the City from 19th till 23rd January.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that an amount not exceeding £170,000 be set aside to cover the costs of the Development and Outreach Initiative during the 2009/2010 financial year.

Quarterly Media Report

The Committee noted a report which outlined the amount of media coverage and the extent of press and media enquiries received concerning the work of the Committee during the period from September till November.

Tourism

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Late Night Art

At the Development Committee on 17 April 2007 Members approved the organisation of pilot gallery tours on Thursday evenings in order to make specific areas of culture more accessible to visitors; encourage venues to extend their opening hours; complement evening economy activity; capitalise on momentum created by the Belfast Art Guide; and provide visitors with cultural activity in the early evening

‘Late Night Art’ was launched in August 2008 with public galleries staying open until 9pm on the first Thursday of every month. BCC worked in partnership with CultureNI to promote the initiative through Belfastgalleries.com and provided free monthly e-newsletters, an interactive map and online exhibitions.

Late Night Art has been a tremendous success and proved that galleries can increase audiences and profile by working in partnership. Monitoring and research from the galleries that participated and a report on Belfastgalleries.com has shown:

- **galleries have received record visitor numbers and with some receiving more visitors on a Thursday night than they do throughout the week. Feedback reports show total footfall recorded at approximately 1,000 per evening,**

the website is receiving more than 1,100 unique visitors per month from over 25 countries worldwide and there are 1,213 members signed up to receive the e-newsletter.

- all Belfast Gallery coach and walking tours sold out within days of going on sale including two tours on 4 December.
- 54% of visitors rated the initiative as excellent and 46% rated it very good
- it has given galleries access to new audiences, including visitors to Belfast, city centre workers and students
- it has raised the profile of Belfast's art in a way that would have been beyond individual galleries to achieve
- the inclusion of introductions from artists and curators, workshops, entertainment and refreshments has made new audiences feel welcome in the gallery environment
- Galleries have recorded a significant increase in national and international visitors
- the initiative has had an overall effect in increasing numbers visiting galleries throughout the month

Music Tourism

The Cultural Tourism Strategy 'Developing Belfast's Opportunity' details the aim to support and develop new cultural tourism product development. Music tourism is one of the newest types of tourism. Recent Visit Britain's research shows that 21% of potential visitors are inspired to choose a destination because of the music or bands of that country and 49% of visitors are very likely to go to live music concerts or events. Music and musicians, solo artists and bands are often someone's first introduction to the unique appeal of this country, and Members will be aware that in our Sister City Nashville the concept of music tourism has reached its ideal.

Music has been the key driver of visitors to Liverpool during their Capital of Culture 2008, supported by Visit Britain's campaign 'England Rocks' which promoted Liverpool internationally as the gateway to music. The Tourism Development Unit has been working with Liverpool's Music Tourism Department to utilise their strategy as a case study for music tourism in Belfast. Members will be aware that Belfast's music has received high international profile in recent months with articles in the New York Times ('Belfast Regains

Its Voice...one of Europe's liveliest towns'), GQ, NME, and the Irish Times. The band Snow Patrol's current single 'Take Back the City' is inspired by Belfast and we have a unique opportunity to attract cultural tourists through music.

The Tourism Development Unit has commitment from the NI Tourist Board, Tourism Ireland and the Arts Council NI to work in partnership to implement a new music tourism plan for Belfast in 2009. Based on leading case studies and Liverpool's strategy and following consultation with key venues and music providers in the City, this plan will include the following new products and initiatives:

1. The Belfast Music Tour

A weekly event which includes a tour of the Ulster Hall and an opportunity to hear an Ulster Orchestra rehearsal, before departing on a two hour guided coach tour of musical venues and key sights including Van Morrison heritage, an introduction to all musical genres (jazz, traditional, folk, rock) and finishing at the Oh Yeah Centre with an exhibition on contemporary music.

2. MP3 Tour

A downloadable self-guided tour of the above.

3. Music Website

Marketing support will be provided by NI Tourist Board who will work in partnership with CultureNI to support belfastmusic.org. This will feature details on Belfast's jazz, traditional, folk, rock and classical traditions. Each genre will include introductions, venues, festivals, hall of fame and fully searchable events listings for all Belfast music genres (CNI is the Arts Council NI's strategic online vehicle to promote culture and the only online events listing service in Northern Ireland). This will be linked to Tourism Ireland in order to facilitate an international e-marketing campaign.

4. Music Exhibition

To complement activity and dovetail with the music heritage exhibition in Ulster Hall, there is an opportunity to exhibit contemporary music at the Oh Yeah Music Centre.

This would include photographs, record sleeves, memorabilia, original stage clothing, timelines and listening booths to form a celebration of our greatest artists and serve as a focal point for contemporary music. There would be a cafe and merchandise area, a juke box with music over the generations and an atmospheric setting where tourists and local music fans can relax and take in some

coffee and music. An acoustic stage could offer music during the day, while the main performance space would come alive in the evenings for themed nights and showcases. This exhibition will be procured via competitive tender which will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Cost.
- Experience and a proven track record in the delivery of interpretation.
- Understanding of learning styles, particularly experiential learning.
- Knowledge of exhibition multi-media, particularly the use of sound.
- Demonstrable creativity and innovation.
- A proven track record of delivering projects to a tight schedule.

5. National and International Marketing

Tourism Ireland will promote Belfast's music products internally by organising a series of media familiarisation trips, and externally across the US through presence and activity in Nashville and South by South West. Music will be the hook to profile Belfast as a cultural tourism destination in the Southern States and increase tourism revenue from this market.

6. Launch

It is planned to launch new music tourism initiatives with the reopening of the Ulster Hall in March 2009 and launch internationally in Nashville on 17 March and in SxSW on 18 March.

Street Trading Update

Members will be aware that the Development Committee approved the response to the Designation of Street Trading on 9 March 2008. At a meeting of the Licensing Committee on 4 November 2008, Members approved Street Designation for the following areas in the Cathedral Quarter - Cotton Court (Waring Street); Hill Street and Commercial Court.

Following new information from DSD and feedback from those living and working in the Cathedral Quarter, it was agreed that approval for designation of Writers' Square be postponed. The future of Writers' Square is still uncertain with discussions between DSD and the Cathedral Quarter Steering Group as to its

future role within in the new North East Quarter Development. The Cathedral Quarter Street Trading Initiative and complementary activity will be launched during the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival in May 2009.

Belfast Welcome Banners

Members will be aware that Welcome to Belfast banners were produced as an integral part of the Cultural Tourism Visitor Management Plan and the time has come for them to be replaced. The Welcome Banners are themed on a seasonal basis and are placed along the main streets on the way into the City centre to provide a bright welcome to the City for visitors. There are 100 Welcome Banner sites which are two-sided in structure.

They will be flexible and will be able to incorporate the possibility of one additional message on half of the banners each season e.g. to profile the Tall Ships visit to Belfast, which is an enduring and important message for residents and visitors alike.

Cathedral Quarter

Members will be aware that the Cultural Tourism Strategy, 'Developing Belfast's Opportunity', details the aim to develop cultural tourism activity in the Cathedral Quarter.

BCC have representation on and work in partnership with the new Cathedral Quarter Steering Group, to ensure the development of the area as a cultural tourism destination and to enhance the quality of the visitor experience in the Quarter.

The Tourism Development Unit is continuing to develop work in this area and implement initiatives and products to develop communication between the cultural sector, the hospitality industry and the cultural tourist in the Cathedral Quarter. This includes:

- Highlighting and profiling the Cathedral Quarter's activities in tourism publications
- The launch and profiling of art and craft Sunday street trading
- Skills development workshops to ensure the hospitality industry is updated with recent developments
- Cathedral Quarter walking tours
- Developing monthly packages between cultural organisations and hospitality sector
- Work in partnership to develop a Cathedral Quarter Cultural Open Day

Resource Implications

Late Night Art

£41,050 which has been provided for from existing budgets.

Music Tourism

No additional financial commitment required – budget approved by Development Committee in May 2008

Belfast Welcome Banners

£124,308 which has been provided for from existing budgets

Cathedral Quarter

No additional financial commitment required – budget approved by Development Committee in May 2008

Recommendations

Late Night Art

It is recommended that Members approve spend of £41,050 to continue Late Night Art throughout 2009 thereby adding to the tourism visitor experience.

Music Tourism

It is recommended that Members note the update on development of Belfast as a music tourism destination and assessed against the criteria above and approve procurement of the music exhibition in accordance with Council procurement policy and procedure. Members are asked to approve delegation of authority to the Chairman of the Development Committee and the Director of Development to accept the most advantageous tender.

Street Trading Update

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this item.

Belfast Welcome Banners

It is recommended that Members approve spend of £124,308 to produce new seasonal Welcome Banners

Cathedral Quarter

It is recommended that Members note the update on the continued development of the Cathedral Quarter as a cultural tourism destination.

Key to abbreviations

BVCB – Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
BCC – Belfast City Council
DSD – Department for Social Development”

During discussion in the matter, it was pointed out that it appeared from the information which had been provided that the Belfast Telegraph had not provided any coverage of the successful Late Night Art Scheme. Accordingly, it was agreed that a letter be sent to the Belfast Telegraph expressing concern at this lack of coverage.

The Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

**Tender for the Provision of Café and
Bar Services at the Ulster Hall**

The Director informed the Committee that, in order to improve upon the range of services which would be offered to customers at the re-opened Ulster Hall, it was intended that a café be located in the main foyer during Monday to Saturday, which would operate in line with the box office opening hours and that a bar service would be available during each event. Accordingly, tenders had been sought for the provision of café and bar services at the facility. She pointed out that catering functions taking place within the Ulster Hall would not be considered as part of the catering franchise. She reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 10th September, concern had been expressed regarding a proposal to restrict the Ulster Hall catering outlet to provide only one brand of coffee. She informed the Members that this restriction had been removed from the tender documentation.

The Director recommended, in order to ensure that the franchisee could be appointed as quickly as possible, that authority be delegated to herself and the Chairman to accept the most advantageous tender received.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Draft Equality Impact Assessment on
Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Park**

The Committee was reminded that the Department for Social Development had published recently a consultation document regarding the Draft Equality Impact Assessment on the regeneration of Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Park and that the Council had submitted previously a response to the Draft Masterplan for the site.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the undernoted document be forwarded to the Department for Social Development as the Council response to the Draft Equality Impact Assessment on Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Park:

**“Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the
draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the regeneration of
Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Park.**

Council wishes to acknowledge the valuable work of Central Government over several years in providing support and working with communities in north Belfast to develop mutually beneficial partnerships and to provide improved opportunities across a range of social, economic, educational and employability initiatives. Such interventions provide a solid platform for ongoing engagement, dialogue and the realisation of the potential of the regeneration of the Crumlin Road Gaol/ Girdwood Park area to create further opportunities to the benefit, in particular, of local people.

Political representatives from all Parties have played an important role in the development of the proposals for the site thus far. It is clear from the deliberations of the Advisory Panel and the consultation exercise that followed the publication of the draft Masterplan for the site that no blueprint for 'shared space' is yet at hand. The draft EQIA reinforces that view.

That said, however, Council continues to regard the regeneration of the site as a vital opportunity to create shared space, rooted in values of inclusion, diversity, equity and inter-dependence, and reaffirms its commitment to exercise civic leadership in working alongside central government, local communities and other stakeholders.

Council is convinced that the regeneration of the area can only be achieved if the importance of such values is recognised and is coupled to a long-term commitment to promote systematically greater civic understanding and debate at all levels, with all stakeholders and at the level of wider public opinion.

Council's response is limited to salient issues arising from the EQIA, namely:

Areas of agreement; Equality and Good Relations;
Housing; Leisure; and the Arc Road.

Areas of agreement

Council welcomes evidence of cross community consensus on 'many issues such as increased employment, tourism, health provision and the potential for improved educational facilities and accessibility to crèche facilities which were perceived to address community need.' (49: 7.3)

Council has extensive experience in employability initiatives (such as the Gasworks Employment Scheme), tourism, leisure and local economic development and remain fully committed to the development of the site to maximise benefits, particularly for local people. To that end, Council will continue to work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to effect such outcomes.

Equality and Good Relations

Belfast City Council is fully committed to the principles and formal legal responsibilities of Equality of Opportunity and the promotion of Good Relations. In recognising both the importance of the regeneration of the area, not least to local communities, and Government's obligation to adhere to the Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), it should be emphasised that equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations should not be reduced to a technical determination. This is particularly important in the context of the sensitivities and divergent views that pertain in this process.

The EQIA states,

'During consultations regarding the draft Masterplan concerns were raised by the Protestant community that if new housing is dominated by one section of the community, this would undermine prospects of the site becoming a shared space where communities could work, live and socialise together. The Advisory Panel were not able to reach agreement on the issue of housing.

That said, this cannot distract from the primary duty to the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Equality Commission states that, 'to the extent that public authorities perceive, in particular circumstances, a tension between the two duties, the primary duty of a public authority is its equality duty. The good relation duty cannot be invoked to justify a failure or refusal to comply with the equality duty'
(EQIA 50: para 7.10 and 7.11)

Despite the assurances that follow (para 7.12) in regard to the need to promote good relations, in this particular instance, given the history of the process and the area, the above is open to the interpretation of the Department applying a technical means to come to a determination that inevitably will be perceived as 'win : lose' by certain stakeholders.

This should be a case of 'win : win': equality of opportunity and promotion of good relations; rather than equality of opportunity or the promotion of good relations. To achieve the former outcome, Government must be committed to an ongoing, long term and systematic process of engagement and dialogue with local political representatives and civic society to enhance civic understanding and come to an agreed political decision, however challenging that process may represent.

Clearly, cross-party political representation on any implementation body, consisting of a range of stakeholders including the local community to develop the site, as proposed, would be regarded as an important means towards ensuring that both equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations would be achieved.

Areas of contention

Members consider the three substantive themes (housing, leisure and the Arc Road), under which the Department considered an adverse or differential impact possible, as illustrating the fundamental weakness of the EQIA process: namely, that it leaves unresolved the local dilemmas and political issues that give rise to contention at a local level.

Housing

The EQIA notes that housing type, location and allocation were recurring issues at both the consultation meetings and focus groups. At an earlier stage of the masterplan consultation process, it was not possible for Council to reach an agreed position on the specific aspects of housing (BCC Response to draft Crumlin Road Masterplan).

It is clear however that Crumlin Road/ Girdwood Park cannot offer, in itself, a panacea for the challenges of unmet housing need in north Belfast. Council therefore welcomes Government's commitment to ongoing dialogue in relation to the final determination of housing type, location and allocation.

Leisure

In regard to Leisure, BCC leisure centres are available for use by all sections of the Community and are compliant with Disability Discrimination Act legislation. Any new leisure facilities, which may be developed by Belfast City Council, will be consistent with this approach.

Arc Road

Council had previously recognised the Arc Road 'as a strong structuring element but it seems that its purpose is dominated by vehicular use within the site'. Council questioned if it would be well integrated into the community and will it be used as a street or will it look more like an entrance to a business park? It was suggested that access by other routes should be feasible – the proposed Arc Road should not be considered the only option' (BCC Response to draft Crumlin Road Masterplan).

In the context of Council's earlier submission, the Department's preparedness to consider relevant measures, cited below, is to be encouraged.

- Reconsider the draft masterplan proposals in relation to the roads and traffic flows and firm up on the detailed design to ensure traffic management measures will be put in place to ensure access for all communities; and
- Improved public transport into and throughout the site (also providing social economy opportunities) as well as environmentally friendly and sustainable transportation routes.

Concluding remarks

Belfast City Council welcomes the publication of the draft EQIA on the Crumlin Road Gaol and Girdwood Park Draft Masterplan. The systematic analysis has identified several categories which may potentially be affected by an adverse or differential impact. The consideration of appropriate mitigating measures or alternative policies is thus also welcomed.

The mission statement within the draft Masterplan is both bold and appropriate:

'To create a regeneration project of international significance which brings maximum economic, social and environmental benefits to the local and wider community and in so doing creates a vibrant, inclusive and diverse environment which attracts present and future generations of people to live, work and visit'

Beyond the technical analysis, a process that will require political acumen, underpinned by processes of community engagement and consensus-building is both necessary and desirable if the vision is to be realised. Belfast City Council is committed to playing its part in those processes to ensure the realisation of a transformational vision for this part of the city."

Nashville Sister Cities and South by Southwest Events

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

At the May 2008 meeting of the Development Committee, Members committed to developing the Nashville Sister City relationship by approving the contents of the 2008/09 Action Plan and its implementation within budget. One of the key elements of this action plan will be the Belfast-Nashville Sister Cities' Celebration

event which is scheduled to take place in Nashville on 17 March 2009. This will feature five of Belfast's best musicians who will perform with their counterparts from Nashville. The event will be compered by Ralph McLean from BBC Northern Ireland.

At the same meeting, Members voted to support Council participation in the South by Southwest (SXSW) Media Conference and Festival for 2009 and 2010. SXSW is the premier global event focusing on the creative side of the music and entertainment business which takes place each year in Austin, Texas. The 2009 event runs from 18–22 March 2009. At least five artists from Belfast have been successful in their application to showcase their music at this event.

As with last year's visit, it is planned that the artists will travel to Nashville and a selection of them will travel onwards to Austin. A civic delegation comprising the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Development Committee and three officers will travel to Nashville with the artists. Following the Nashville event, the rest of the delegation (Chair and Deputy Chair of Development Committee and three officers) will travel onwards to Austin. In addition, the Creative Industries Officer will travel directly to Austin.

Key Issues

A music tourism event is planned for Nashville on 17 March 2009. Delivered by the Belfast Nashville Songwriters' Festival, this will feature five of Belfast's best musicians who perform with high profile singer-songwriters from Nashville. It is a unique opportunity to launch Belfast's Music Tourism initiatives internationally and this will be endorsed by the Nashville Mayor's Office of Economic Development and Nashville Sister City Representatives. Arts Council NI has committed £15,500 to cover artists' and promoters' costs for the Nashville event.

Tourism Ireland has been working with its offices across the United States in recent months to highlight events on 17 March and will be promoting the event to travel and music journalists. They invited the Belfast Nashville Songwriters' Festival to attend their travel trade showcase in Atlanta to profile the Sister City Relationship and linkages. They will launch and market Belfast City Council's new music products including belfastmusic.org to promote Belfast as a vibrant European destination and the gateway to Ireland and Europe.

The Ulster Historical Foundation will also attend the event in Nashville on 17 March to run workshops in order to promote Scots-Irish genealogy and how to trace family history in order to profile cultural and historical links between the two cities and target the Scots-Irish community in the Southern States as potential holiday visitors.

Media organisations within Belfast and Nashville are working in partnership to ensure maximum coverage and opportunities for live broadcasts.

An update of the Sister City Action Plan and March event was approved by the Belfast Nashville Sister City Advisory Group (which includes representatives from the leisure and cultural sector, historical groups, genealogy associations, community development, media, educational organisations and the US Consulate) at a meeting held on 26 November 2008.

Meanwhile, SXSW will provide an international showcasing platform for the Belfast artists invited to participate in this year's event. Selected artists will travel from Nashville on 18 March to attend the event while other artists will travel directly from Belfast to Austin. They will take part in two showcase events and will also attend individual meetings with production companies, record labels and other performing artists. The Belfast artists who participated in last year's event generated over \$450,000 of new business and the showcase events profiled Belfast as a creative city to the global entertainment industry and provided a platform for an enhanced presence at the 2009 event.

Resource Implications

For the Nashville Sister Cities event, no additional financial commitment is required from the Committee. A budget of £49,663 was approved by Development Committee in May 2008 to implement the Belfast Nashville 2008/09 Action Plan. £10,350 of this budget will be required from Belfast City Council to carry out the Sister Cities event. This will be used towards Member, officer and artists' travel from Belfast to Nashville and onwards to Austin.

Estimated costs break down as follows:

5 economy flights to Belfast/Nashville/ Austin/Belfast; (3 x officers, Chair & Deputy Chair of Development Committee);	£4500
Accommodation in Nashville; (4 nights, max. £180 per night x 5 people – Chair and Deputy Chair of Development Committee, 3 x officers)	£3600
Accommodation in Austin; (5 nights, max. £150 per night x 5 people - Chair and Deputy Chair of Development Committee, 3 x officers)	£2250
TOTAL	£10,350

For the SXSW event, a budget of £40,000 was approved by Development Committee in May 2008. This budget will be used towards the costs of the attendance of the Creative Industries Officer, two Belfast Showcase events, marketing, business and artist costs and exhibition and conference registration for the four officers and two Members. The indicative breakdown is as follows:

1 economy flight Belfast-Austin-Belfast for Creative Industries Officer	£700
Accommodation - 5 nights x £150 per night (maximum)	£750
Conference & Exhibition Registration - \$500 x 6 (\$3000)	£2000
Event Production & Co-ordination x 2	£15,000
Marketing & Promotion	£5,000
Exhibition Costs (stand hire etc)	£5,000
Project Management (to be undertaken by NIMIC)	£7,000
Artist Costs (contribution to costs of 7 artists travelling directly from Belfast to Austin) – travel, accommodation	£4,550
TOTAL	£40,000

Recommendations

- Approve the Civic Visit to Nashville of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Committee or their nominees, plus 3 officers on 15–18 March 2009 at a cost of £10,350.
- Agree the participation at South by Southwest 2009 of Chair and Deputy Chair of Development Committee (or nominees) plus four officers from 18-23 March 2009.

Abbreviations

SXSW South by South West”

During discussion in the matter, a question was raised as to whether it was necessary to send so many officers to the events. In response, both the Chairman and the Director indicated that, based on their experience in attending this year’s events, the number of attending officers proposed in the report would be the minimum required in order to ensure that the Council benefited from participating in the events.

The Director informed the Committee that it had been intended that the Lord Mayor would participate in the visits to both Nashville and Austin but this had not proved to be possible due to other prior engagements. However, given that the party would be meeting the Mayors of Nashville and other American cities, she believed it would be important for the Deputy Lord Mayor to participate in the trip and requested that the recommendation within the report be amended to reflect this.

Following discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed also that the Deputy Lord Mayor be requested to participate in the two events.

Chairman