

# Development Committee

Monday, 20th April, 2009

## MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor M. Browne (Chairman); and  
Councillors Attwood, Campbell, Convery,  
Crozier, Cunningham, Ekin, Humphrey, B. Kelly,  
Lavery, C. Maskey, McCarthy and Rodgers.
- In attendance: Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives;  
Ms. C. Taggart, Community Services Manager;  
Mr. T. Husbands, Head of City Events and Venues; and  
Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors McCausland and Mhic Giolla Mhín.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April.

### Departmental Plan 2008/2009 - Quarterly Update

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided information on the current status of projects and initiatives which had been carried out by the Department during the period from 1st January till 31st March. The Committee noted further that a report concerning the Departmental Plan for the 2009/2010 year would be submitted to its next monthly meeting.

### European Unit - Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### “Background

**Members will be aware of regular European Unit Progress reports. Members are asked to consider progress on the following projects:**

- 1. Quartiers En Crise**
- 2. Interreg IVA programme**
- 3. Irish Sea Partnership**

### Key Issues

#### 1. Quartiers En Crise

Members will be aware that Belfast City Council is a member of the local Belfast Quartiers En Crise network and in February of last year the Committee agreed that the Council would take over co-ordination of the local network from the Belfast Health Trust.

Members of the local Quartiers en Crise network are:

- Belfast Health Trust
- Belfast City Council
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Department of Education & Learning
- Belfast Regeneration Office
- Belfast Area Partnership Boards

All members with the exception of BAPS pay an annual membership fee of £2,500. From this €7,800 is paid to the Brussels secretariat as a membership fee which contributes to staff and running costs of the Brussels office. The balance is used to cover travel costs for local members to attend meetings and to provide match funding to support the development and implementation of new projects.

This fee allows members to access information on funding and policy developments, to influence policy and to work in partnership with others to develop projects that assist people facing disadvantage.

Since taking over responsibility for co-ordination of the local group in June last year, group members have reviewed their roles, improved how the network operates and renewed their commitment. Information on projects sent out by the Brussels secretariat now reaches a wider local network and through this we have enabled local organisations to partner in two projects that are currently being considered for European funding. These focus on migrant women and the poverty and health issues relating to third country nationals. If successful these projects will start in autumn 2009.

Belfast's membership also currently includes holding the position of Treasurer on the Executive Bureau which oversees the work of the network. The Bureau meets quarterly in different cities and there is an Annual General Meeting. All expenses relating to attendance at the Executive Bureau are paid for centrally by the Brussels secretariat. Members of the Executive Bureau are usually officers acting by proxy for the leading politician in each city with a remit for European affairs, in Belfast that is the Council's Chairman of the Development Committee.

As earlier indicated, since the transfer of responsibility locally to Belfast City Council for coordination of QEC, the partnership has reviewed its role and decided to widen the remit and names of organisations at a local level to become known as 'Belfast in Europe-QEC-ERAN'.

The rationale behind this is to highlight, promote and share the wealth of European policy dissemination, project development and networks that each of the local constituent member organisations engage in. Given the growing importance that the Northern Ireland Assembly is now placing on Europe since the launch of the Northern Ireland Task Force on Europe, there is increased interest in European affairs at a local level. By re-naming QEC Belfast to 'Belfast in Europe -QEC-ERAN' the members believe it will portray a more open and inclusive organisation that seeks to share European Union opportunities with stakeholders beyond the Belfast grouping. It is also a more meaningful name than the French term 'Quartiers En Crise'.

To launch and celebrate this new identity the new 'Belfast in Europe-QEC-ERAN' partnership plans to hold a launch event in September 2009, preferably in the City Hall. This will be a two fold event to reinvigorate and rename the cross sectoral partnership and to coincide with the 20th Anniversary of Quartiers En Crise.

When agreeing to the transfer of coordination, the Committee also agreed to pay the membership fee of £2,500 for 2008, fees are now due for 2009 for the same amount. Membership enables the Council to access funding and policy information to support the development and implementation of new projects which underpin its strategic objectives. It also enables the Council to be part of a wider European group which seeks to influence policy on Urban issues.

The Chairman of the Development Committee or his nominee and/or officer acting as proxy are required to attend the quarterly Executive Bureau meetings and QEC AGM to be held in Brussels on 24th-26th June 2009

#### Resource Implications

£2,500 from the 2009/2010 European Unit budget is required to pay the 2009 membership fee for Quartiers en Crise.

#### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (i) Approve the 2009 annual membership fee for Quartiers en Crise of £2,500;

- (ii) Agree the attendance of the Chairman of the Development Committee or their nominee and/or appropriate officer at the quarterly Executive Bureau meetings and QEC AGM. Costs incurred are covered by the Brussels secretariat; and
- (iii) Members are asked to note the new name 'Belfast in Europe-QEC-ERAN' and approve the attendance of all Development Committee Members at the re-launch and 20th Anniversary event planned for September 2009.

## **2. Interreg IVA**

Members will recall a report presented to Committee in January 2009 highlighting the seven cross border projects approved for delivery within the Greater Belfast Metropolitan Area (Comet). This is the first time that Comet has secured cross border funding under the Interreg IVA programme.

The European Unit has received draft letters of offer in relation to two of the seven projects and is currently finalising the details before taking them to the Comet Interreg Board and subsequently the Development Committee for sign off.

Members will also be aware that Belfast City Council through the Development Committee will act as lead Council and lead partner on behalf of the Comet councils with the Special European Union Programmes Body. In practice this means that Belfast City Council will assume all legal and financial responsibility in relation to the implementation of funding to the seven projects. To this end the Council has received 100% funding to recruit an Interreg IVA Secretariat comprising a manager, a finance and monitoring officer and an administrator. These posts have been evaluated by the Council's Business Improvement Section and recruitment is underway.

In order to begin and monitor implementation of the seven projects, the Council's Legal Services Department has developed a partnership agreement to be put in place along with a detailed project document between Belfast City Council on behalf of the Comet councils and each of the seven lead project promoters.

In parallel to the development of the partnership agreement and project document templates, Legal Services has also developed a Service Level Agreement to be put in place as a partnership agreement between the six Comet councils.

Under the new governance arrangements of Interreg IVA, the Comet Shadow Interreg Partnership for IIIA was brought to a close at the last Shadow Board Meeting held on 11 February 2009.

This effectively brings to an end the role of social partners who will now only be invited to information and promotional events in the instance of new funding calls. A new Interreg IVA partnership was established and held its first meeting on 15th April 2009.

Under the guidance of the SEUPB, the Interreg IVA managing authority, the new Comet Interreg Board will consist of two Elected Members from each of the six Comet councils. Members are asked to nominate the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Development Committee as Belfast City Council's representatives on the Board.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (i) Approve the Belfast City Council's partnership agreement, project document and service level agreement with respect to delivering the IVA programme; and
- (ii) Approve the appointment of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Development to the newly configured Comet Interreg Board.

### 3. Irish Sea Region Partnership

In March of 2008, the Committee received an update on the Irish Sea Region Partnership and agreed a contribution of £2,000 towards the establishment of the Irish Sea Platform and development of an Interreg IVB bid.

Over the past year the ISP has brought together cities, academic institutions, marine institutions and regional governments to explore potential opportunities to collaborate to maximise benefits for this geographical area and to prepare a funding bid for submission under the Interreg IVB North West Europe programme for Territorial Co-operation. The funding application will be submitted in April 2009.

The Irish Sea region is defined as the Northwest of England, Wales, Scotland, the Isle of Man, the East coast of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It holds a total population of 15 million and in 2005 it had a combined gross domestic product of £450 million. The region provides an important link between the island of Ireland, the Isle of Man and the UK and there are a number of strategic interests operating in and around the area.

The ISP recognises the unique characteristics of the Irish Sea region within the European Union and these are linked with the strong cultural, economic and social ties between the communities around the Irish Sea. It also recognises that the region shares similar challenges at different levels with different issues including:

- Increased urbanisation
- Tourism
- Fishing
- Transport
- Sport
- Energy Consumption
- Regional Trade

As a platform, the ISP seeks to offer a valuable and rare opportunity for enhanced co-operation to encourage a partnership approach to resolving such issues. To support its work, it is seeking funding under the transnational European funding programme known as Interreg IVB – North West Europe zone. Through this programme the ISP seeks to foster and sustain territorial cooperation between the regions around the Irish Sea by developing a transnational partnership which brings together factors from the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, England's Northwest, Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man. The ultimate goal is to gain recognition of the area as a European macro region, to establish a brand for economic growth which will enhance its competitiveness and contribute to overall sustainable development.

If successful, funding will support cooperation and collaboration between:

- Key politicians
- Representatives of national, regional, city and local governments
- Platform members
- Statutory organizations
- Universities
- Marine, fishing, energy and transport sectors.

It will help to identify opportunities for partnership working, enabling partners to address key issues, identify new projects and ways of working to ensure sustainable development of the area as well as lobbying for funding and policy support.

The platform will provide an ideal opportunity to develop close working relationships between multi-layered governance structures to ensure that economic development and competitiveness takes place within an environmentally sustainable framework. It will focus on finding common solutions to sustainable development, connectivity, climate change and competitiveness which can be replicated across the North West European programme area.

The ISP's key activities will be:

- To establish the Irish Sea Platform as a vehicle for increased cooperation across and within the Irish Sea region, bringing together politicians and representatives of national, regional, city and local governments, statutory organisations, universities, marine, environmental, fishing, energy and transport sectors;
- To promote the Irish Sea region as a European macro region and a brand for economic growth, enhanced competitiveness and environmental sustainability;
- To further the strategic delivery of increased competitiveness within the North West Europe Programme area; and
- Promote the concept of environmental sustainability in relation to communities around the Irish Sea, competitiveness and the management of natural resources.

In addition to the application to establish the platform, two other work packages have been developed focusing coasts at risk and marine spatial planning. These compliment the overall aim of the ISP and provide early examples of what can be achieved under the banner of the platform.

#### Resource Implications

The total value of the application is around £4 million and platform partners are being asked for a cash contribution of £10,000 per year over three years. Partners include:

- Northwest Regional Development Agency
- 4NW – The Regional Leaders Forum for the Northwest of England
- Dublin Regional Authority
- Belfast City Council
- Isle of Man Government
- Dublin City Council
- Mersey Dee Alliance
- Cumbria County Council
- University of Cork, Cork Marine Resources Centre (CMRC)
- Liverpool University
- Bangor University
- Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
- Natural England
- Countryside Council for Wales

**This funding will entitle partners to:**

- **Membership of the Platform**
- **Opportunities to attend ISP Workshops and Conferences**
- **Provide input into research activity**
- **Opportunities to shape and develop policy in the Irish Sea region**
- **Access potential future European funding sources**

**For Belfast City Council resource implications also include staff time to prepare for and attend meetings. This will be considered as a contribution in kind and amounts to £25,553.91 over the three years of the project for two staff members. Within the application we can also demonstrate staff and costs incurred in the preparation of the application as a contribution in kind, this mounts to £2,140 staff time, £886.58 travel and accommodation.**

**As per the previous report to Committee in March 2008 this project also involves working across departments and with other stakeholders including the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, the Port Authority and others.**

#### **Recommendations**

**Members are asked to:**

- (i) Approve a £30,000 cash contribution to the Irish Seas Platform as cash match funding over the three years of the project (from within the European Unit budget);**
- (ii) Approve staff time as match funding amounting to £25,553.91 over the three years of the project; and**
- (iii) Approve contribution of costs already incurred in developing the platform and preparing the application as match funding mounting to £3,027.**

#### **Key to Abbreviations**

**BAPS – Belfast Area Partnerships**

**ISP – Irish Sea Platform**

**QEC-ERAN – Quartiers En Crise – European Regeneration Areas Network”**

In response to a Member’s question regarding the engagement which the European Unit had with Northern Ireland’s three Members of the European Parliament, the European Manager indicated that she met with them twice a year in order to update them on the work which was being undertaken by the Council’s European Unit. The MEPs were also invited to the Belfast Showcases which were held each year in Brussels during the Open Day events. In addition, she pointed out that she had offered to meet with all of the candidates for the forthcoming European Elections.



Following further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the foregoing report and noted the information which had been provided by the European Manager.

**Development and Outreach Initiative 2009/2010**

(Councillor Crozier declared an interest in this matter in that an organisation of which he was the Director had been awarded grant assistance under the Initiative and left the room while the matter was under discussion.)

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

She advised the Committee that a budget of £165,000 had been included in the 2009/10 Departmental Estimates. However, twenty-three applications requesting funding of £388,712 had been received. Due to the high standard of submissions, only those projects scoring over 60% had been recommended for assistance.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the officers' recommendations set out hereunder:

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>	<b>Amount Requested (£)</b>	<b>Recommendation (£)</b>
An Droichead	0%	10,300	0
ArtsEkta	67.8%	9,500	5,600
Beat Initiative	79.8%	20,000	15,000
Belfast Exposed Photography	73.6%	10,262	7,700
Belfast Print Workshop	56.2%	19,650	
Beyond Skin	64.8%	18,000	10,800
Cinemagic	57.4%	18,000	
Creative Writers' Network	0%	18,230	
Face Inclusion Matters	46.6%	19,623	
Golden Thread Gallery	69.8%	17,400	12,200
Greater Shankill Partnership	68.8%	20,000	14,000
Lower North Belfast Community Council	73.2%	19,954	15,000
New Lodge Arts	69%	19,425	13,600
Northern Visions	77%	12,518	9,400
Old Museum Arts Centre	79.2%	19,985	15,000
Prime Cut Productions	68.8%	20,000	14,000

Applicant	Total Percentage	Amount Requested (£)	Recommendation (£)
Queen's Film Theatre	56.8%	20,000	
Streetwise Community Circus Workshops	69.6%	15,150	10,700
Tinderbox	0%	18,470	
Trans Urban Arts	64.4%	16,500	5,100
Wheelworks	71.2%	8,850	6,700
Young at Art	58%	19,965	
Youth Action Northern Ireland	64.4%	16,930	10,200
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>388,712</b>	<b>165,000</b>

**Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure**

The Head of Economic Initiatives informed the Members that the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure was undertaking an Inquiry into the funding of the Arts in Northern Ireland. The Council had been requested to submit written evidence to the Inquiry and to provide a transcript of the recent Council-organised conference entitled "Harnessing Cultural Value in Tough Economic Times". In addition, the Assembly Committee had invited the Council to make an oral presentation to it on 28th May at a meeting in Enniskillen.

During discussion, a Member pointed out that the Council's response did not indicate the amount of money which it provided under the Multi-Annual Fund Scheme to the Ulster Orchestra and requested that this be amended. The Head of Economic Initiatives apologised for the error and assured the Committee that the omission would be corrected.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed that:

- (i) the draft response, a copy of which is available on Modern.gov, be submitted as the Council's official comments to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure, subject to the amount of funding provided by the Council to the Ulster Orchestra being included within the document;
- (ii) a transcript of the proceedings of the "Harnessing Cultural Value in Tough Economic Times" conference be provided to the Assembly Committee; and
- (iii) the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman (or their nominees), together with two officers, give the Council's submission to the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure at its meeting in Enniskillen on 28th May.

### Renewing the Routes Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### “Relevant Background Information

This report provides ongoing updates on activity in respect of the following items:

1. Proposed variations in the budget allocations towards a proposed environmental project within the agreed Springfield Road Action Plan; and
2. Carlisle Circus.

#### Key Issues

##### 1. Springfield Road Variation

The proposal to develop a project for the site adjacent to the PSNI facility on the Springfield Road formed part of the Springfield Road Integrated Development Fund action plan. The potential for environmental improvements at the vacant and derelict site was identified as part of the open space improvements element of the plan. The initial scoping work for the project has identified a number of issues around the current site condition and ownership that make it unfeasible to pursue the proposed works within the programme timescales.

During the detailed developmental activity it has been difficult to confirm ownership of the site and the potential for commitment to a viable proposal including future maintenance arrangements. In addition, the presence of invasive vegetation species has been identified on the site which, in the absence of remedial works, further undermines the viability of the proposed environmental improvements.

This potential open space project was located close to the Springhill Park where a separate environmental scheme was being developed for the area adjacent to the Springfield Road.

The scheme for environmental improvement works at Springhill was at a development stage that allowed the scope of the activity to be increased to provide a more comprehensive scheme, encompassing an area for a new public art feature being developed by Groundwork.

In order to progress the continued implementation of increased works at Springhill Park it is proposed that the identified budget of £25,000 be reallocated to support the more comprehensive scheme for the public park area. The reallocation of resources would contribute to additional environmental improvement works on the Springhill Park site that would be in accordance with the overall objectives for the original budget allocation.

There are no additional financial implications arising from the reallocation.

#### Recommendation

Members are recommended to approve the reallocation of £25,000 to support the increased works scheme at Springhill Park.

#### 2. Carlisle Circus

Committee agreed to the appointment of an artist to develop a new art piece for the Carlisle Circus roundabout on 18th October 2006. Following appointment, the artist (Iain McColl) carried out extensive community consultation in the area surrounding the roundabout and with schools and organisations from adjoining communities.

On the basis of the completed consultations the artist developed a final art piece concept that was presented to the selection panel in 2007. Mr McColl was commissioned in summer 2007 and completed the substantive composition and assembly work of the 'Pharus' in late 2008. The Committee was updated with progress in October 2008 when it was reported that the artwork was complete and awaiting final inspections. The necessary statutory and owner consents for the proposed art piece have now been secured and proposal can now proceed to final installation.

The concept of the 'Pharus' which is to be sited on the existing plinth at Carlisle Circus roundabout was developed from the consultation events and seeks to reflect the industrial heritage whilst signifying to a positive future for North Belfast. The management of the installation and associated publicity will be coordinated with Corporate Communications.

There are no additional financial implications arising from the reallocation.

#### Recommendation

Members are requested to note the Carlisle Circus project updates set out within the report.

### **Resource Implications**

There are no additional financial implications arising from the reallocation.

### **Abbreviations**

**IDF Integrated Development Fund**  
**PSNI Police Service of Northern Ireland”**

During discussion, a Member reminded the Committee that, during a meeting with the Minister for Regional Development on 28th January, a deputation from the Committee had expressed concern that projects being undertaken by the Council under the Renewing the Routes Initiative were being delayed due to poor co-operation by officials from the Roads Service. The Minister had been concerned to hear of this and had indicated that he would have the matter investigated. The Member enquired as to whether the Council was now receiving better co-operation from Roads Service. In reply the Head of Economic Initiatives indicated that, since the meeting with the Minister, the situation had improved.

Following further discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided regarding the increased level of co-operation which the Council was receiving from the Roads Service in connection with the Renewing the Routes Initiative and adopted the recommendations contained within the foregoing report.

### **Re-Imaging Communities Update and Participation in a Proposed Event with Derry City Council**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“Relevant Background Information**

This report provides an update on the ongoing implementation phase of the activity in respect of the ‘Re-Imaging Communities’ initiative funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The initial project identification activity that formed the basis of the approval was carried out by consultants appointed by the Good Relations Unit to identify both the potential for a range of projects and the basic brief for the final form of art piece with associated budget costs.

Following the Arts Council approval of the first phase of activity, the Development Department, through the Planning & Transport Unit, was tasked with the implementation of the twelve potential projects across the City.

At a presentation to the Arts Council to update on the ongoing work and progress across the different projects, the potential for additional activity based on the exchange of experience was highlighted. Following the meeting the facilitator appointed to work

with the different communities explored the potential for the exchange of experience and shared learning in relation to the re-imaging work. On the basis of this independent work and contact with other organisations an offer to participate in a joint event was received from Derry City Council.

### Key Issues

#### Project Updates

The 'Re-Imaging Communities' initiative focuses on both Council and ACNI corporate objectives in encouraging positive community relations through physical works to address visible signs of sectarianism and racism. The objectives of the programme are to contribute to the creation of a welcoming local environment for all residents and visitors through direct works and a facilitated engagement process with local communities and artists.

The project seeks to facilitate sustainable transformation of the physical environments with civic leadership and pride engendered within the local communities as they lead the change through a facilitated project development process.

The ACNI approved an overall budget of £232,000 for the Council to deliver 12 projects covering North, South, East and West Belfast, subject to further approvals at the final design stage. In order to secure the involvement and continued engagement of the local communities the funding has enabled the appointment of two facilitators to work with Council staff on the development and final implementation.

The individual projects have an artist appointed to work with the community on the development and delivery of high quality artwork which will either replace existing sectarian murals or target the re-imaging of local environments to enhance the space for the communities to enjoy and celebrate their culture in a more inclusive manner. The selection of the artist and the final artwork is carried out through local panels with the participation of the local groups, facilitators and Council officers.

From the potential twelve projects identified through the initial work eleven projects are progressing towards final implementation having secured ACNI approval. This implementation will follow completion of the facilitated developmental work between the artists and the local groups. A summary of the projects that are progressing to implementation is outlined below:

**An Droichead:** A sculptural piece to be situated on the railway bridge adjacent to the Klondyke building on the Lower Ormeau Road. This project has been developed with the communities living in the Lower Ormeau area. The sculpture will be made of steel with a glass inlay and seeks to reflect the cultural diversity of the area.

**Ballysillan/Benview:** A sculptural piece is being developed with Ballysillan Primary School and local community groups to reflect and celebrate their culture through an iconic artwork. The final pyramid sculpture piece will be located on a site opposite the primary school.

**Conway Wall:** Workshops have been completed with community groups adjacent to Conway Mill and the local Travelling Community to produce a mural for the wall opposite the Mill incorporating images from the communities set alongside 'The Sky' poem by Tom Kerr.

**Donegall Pass:** A mural is being developed with the local community to replace an existing mural on Oak Street where it meets Donegall Pass. Developmental work with the facilitator is currently finalising the design which it is anticipated will see the new mural completed and unveiled at the end of May.

**Glenbryn:** A mural between Alliance Road and Alliance Parade will be replaced with a new mural developed to positively celebrate local community culture. The agreed mural will incorporate a local sports theme and reflect the setting of the hills. The final implementation is expected to be completed by the end of May.

**Inverary:** A sculptural piece will be situated in a square within the housing estate to enhance the immediate environment and seek to deflect anti-social behaviour and dumping. The proposed metal sculpture has been developed by the community to celebrate their local culture and history.

**LORAG:** An art piece will be installed at the bottom of Balfour Avenue, following the completion of the Council's alley-gating scheme. The three dimensional art work on the themes of the river, history and environment will be incorporated onto a wall which will be constructed by the Housing Executive as part of the alleygate works.

**Lower Shankill:** Ten murals will be replaced by new imagery developed by four artists working with the communities in different artist techniques including traditional mural painting, digital media and aerosol murals. The new murals and images, for which implementation works have commenced, will reflect the positive community theme of the 'New Shankill'.

**Muck Hills:** Four art panels will be erected alongside the M2 motorway fence at St Peter's Hill, alongside implemented landscaping work, as part of the works to transform the local environment. The artwork has been developed in conjunction with different groups using the Hammer Activity Centre and will portray imagery and stories from 'under the mountains'.

**Short Strand:** The existing peace line at Bryson Street will form the basis for the proposed installation of a three dimensional art work. The local community in Short Strand is seeking to soften the appearance of the wall and have created individual artworks which the artist has translated onto tiles to form a work that celebrates Belfast's maritime history and marine life. This three dimensional tiled work will be supplemented by an element funded by Greencare and facilitated by Groundwork.

**Village Focus Group:** Sculptural figures have been created with the community to reflect the working class heritage of the Village and celebrate their industrial past. The figures will be set onto the piers on the Tate's Avenue railway bridge with additional sculptures of trains acting as a welcoming feature to people entering as a link or representations of the former railway halt. A welcoming mural has been designed to replace existing murals and cover graffiti at the underpass of the bridge.

As stated above only eleven of the twelve potential projects are projected to be completed within the programme timescale. The potential project for the replacement of murals in Inner East is unlikely to proceed. Unfortunately it has not been possible to secure local agreement for the proposed scope of the potential works or the process for the delivery of the final artworks.

#### **Attendance at Proposed Re-Imaging Event**

Following the update meeting with the ACNI, the facilitator appointed to work with the different communities, explored the potential for the exchange of experience and shared learning in relation to the re-imaging work. The idea for exchange and shared learning was discussed with the ACNI and groups involved in the facilitated project development processes at Short Strand and the Lower Shankill.

The potential for the exploration of the parallel work and the potential for the further experience from the projects was welcomed by the participants and supported by the ACNI as complementary activity under the scope of the Re-Imaging programme. Following further work and contact with organisations carrying out similar activity an offer was received from Derry City Council for the groups to participate in a joint event structured around the experience with these transformation projects.



The proposed event is scheduled to take place on the 13 May 2009, with participants from the Lower Shankill and Short Strand communities who were involved in the development of their respective art works. The groups would be accompanied by the facilitators, artists and the Council project management staff directly responsible for the re-imaging work.

The proposed event also presents the opportunity for local Members to participate in the activity and Committee approval is sought for the attendance of the Members from the Pottinger and Court Electoral Areas with the Director of Development or their nominees.

Whilst the proposed event is considered to be supportive of the overall programme the ACNI have indicated that they are unable to support the costs associated with the visit under the Re-Imaging Communities funding. The approximate costs for coach hire and catering for up to 20 participants has been estimated as £850, on the basis of Derry City Council meeting the costs for the venue facilities and their participants at the event. In the absence of funding from ACNI the costs for the participation in the event would have to be met by the Belfast City Council. As the event offers the potential for the Council to highlight both the positive work developed in the two target areas and the ongoing activity under the wider Re-imaging programme it is suggested that the Committee approves the proposed activity and the participation of local Members.

#### Resource Implications

The approximate costs for coach hire and catering for up to 20 participants has been estimated as £850, on the basis of Derry City Council meeting the costs for the venue facilities and their participants at the event.

#### Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- note the update in respect of the individual projects as set out within the report;
- approve the attendance of Members representing the Court and Pottinger Electoral Areas and the Director of Development or her nominee at the event organised by Derry City Council scheduled to be held in Derry on 13th May 2009; and

- approve the allocation of £850 towards the cost of participating in the event with Derry City Council.

### **Abbreviations**

**ACNI – Arts Council of Northern Ireland”**

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

### **Extension of the Roden Street Community Development Group's Lease for Grosvenor Recreation Centre**

The Community Services Manager reminded the Committee that the former Client Services (Community and Leisure Services) Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 3rd November, 1998, had agreed to transfer control of Grosvenor Recreation Centre to the Roden Street Community Development Group for a period of ten years. During this time the Group had been successful in its management of the Centre, had developed a programme of activities and had worked in partnership with the Council, local community organisations and a range of statutory agencies.

She reported that, in accordance with the terms of the lease agreement, the Group had sought permission to extend its lease by a period of five years, with effect from 1st April, 2009. Since the lease stipulated a rent review be undertaken when the renewal option was exercised, such a review had established that the rental be £17,350 per annum. The Community Services Manager pointed out that the Development Group had not breached the terms of its existing lease and, accordingly, she recommended that the lease be extended by a period of five years, with effect from 1st April, 2009 and that the rent be increased to £17,350 per annum.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Holding of Funfair**

The Community Development Manager advised the Committee that Ballymacarrett Leisure Centre, which was managed by Connswater Community and Leisure Limited, had received a request from Cullens Funfair to locate a funfair on an area of open ground next to the Centre. She pointed out that, although the land was owned by the Council, it was managed by Connswater Community and Leisure Limited. She pointed out further that Cullens had operated a funfair for a number of years on an all-weather pitch at Andersonstown Leisure Centre and that the Manager of that facility had indicated that, although the behaviour of a small number of persons attending the funfair in its early years had caused difficulties, generally there had not been any significant problems.

The Community Development Manager reported that it was proposed that the funfair would be held from 28th till 31st May and Cullens had indicated that the music would cease at 9.30 p.m. and the site would close by 10.00 p.m. each day. In addition, the Company had provided an undertaking that the site would be returned to its original condition at the conclusion of the funfair.

She pointed out that residents neighbouring the site had been informed by letter of the proposal and invited to attend a public meeting. However, only a small number of people had attended the meeting and she was not convinced that this indicated that there was public support for the funfair. She informed the Members that the Police Service of Northern Ireland had indicated that, given its previous experience of the promoter, it was not opposed to the event being held.

During discussion in the matter, a Member informed the Committee that none of the Councillors representing the Victoria Electoral Area had been invited to the public meeting and that, although some 250 houses were located across the road from the area where it was proposed to locate the funfair, none of those residents had received letters concerning the public meeting and he understood that of the 20 houses to receive such letters, only five or six people had attended the meeting. In addition, he was of the opinion that the area of land was not suitable for the funfair since it was considerably smaller than the all-weather pitch which had been used at the Andersonstown Leisure Centre.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed, since Connswater Community and Leisure Limited had failed to demonstrate sufficient community support for the funfair, to refuse the request from the group to permit Cullens Funfair to hold a funfair on an area of land beside Ballymacarrett Leisure Centre.

### **Hammer Pavilion**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“Relevant Background Information**

**Shankill Football Club is seeking a management lease for part of the Hammer Community Complex and has been involved in discussions with officers from the Community Services and Parks and Leisure Department since 2007-2008. SFC currently has a facilities management agreement with Parks & Leisure to manage a football pitch and a Portakabin located within the Hammer Community Complex site. SFC also has independent access to part of the Hammer Pavilion for changing and shower facilities. The Pavilion is a small community facility managed by Community Services and adjacent to the Hammer Community Centre. SFC asserts that its potential development is curtailed by current resources and specifically their ability to meet Senior League requirements, to host visiting teams, training and development for members, health & safety, fund raising, flexible weekend access and the general expansion of its membership. Based on this, SFC has requested that the Council should devolve operational management of the Pavilion to the SFC.**

**In 2008 BDO Stoy Hayward carried out a management options appraisal of the Hammer Community Complex, consulting with all local stakeholders. The report recommended that the Council consider a pilot lease arrangement with SFC for the Pavilion.**

Initially the pilot would be for six to twelve months, giving SFC an opportunity to demonstrate financial and management capability. The report highlighted the concerns of other users of the Pavilion who would potentially be displaced by a lease agreement but also acknowledged that there was other additional local capacity. BDO Stoy Hayward also recommended the transfer of the Pavilion from Community Services to Parks & Leisure in order to give SFC the specialist support for its prime activity, that is, sport and recreation.

### Key Issues

If a pilot management lease is agreed with SFC there are a number of issues requiring consideration:

1. A temporary management lease between SFC and the Council setting out the responsibilities of the Club, including agreed performance outputs. This will include a budget for running and maintenance costs;
2. Monitoring of the agreement by the Outdoor Leisure Team;
3. Parks & Leisure to support the Club to develop a Sports Development Plan, including pitch and facility management and accessing other sports funding opportunities;
4. Community Services to support the Club to develop effective governance structures based on the open and accountable management of resources;
5. On the completion of a successful pilot phase, it is proposed that the SFC's lease would transfer to the Parks & Leisure Department with any additional lease agreement to be negotiated with that Department;
6. Community Services is currently supporting a programme of activities at the Pavilion, which in the event of a management lease to SFC would require relocation. Officers are currently exploring local options; and
7. The current vacant Supervisor's post at the Pavilion will not be recruited pending the outcome of the pilot.

### Resource Implications

#### Financial

£13,354 pro rata annual fee assessment for utilities and small repairs which exists within current budget estimates.

### Human Resources

Possible postponement of the recruitment of the Supervisor's post.

### Asset and Other Implications

Changing the management of the Hammer Pavilion from Council to independent community management

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to:

1. A pilot management lease arrangement with SFC for the Hammer Pavilion from August 2009 until August 2010 with the option of a continuation based on satisfactory management performance during the pilot;
2. SFC facilitate current users if additional local accommodation cannot be secured;
3. Council Officers supporting the Club during this pilot to develop the necessary capability to manage the facility in terms of financial management, building maintenance and sports development;
4. The preparation of a legal agreement to support the pilot management lease arrangements;
5. An agreed fee is paid to the Club for the period of the pilot towards utility and small maintenance costs;
6. Officers undertake an evaluation in June 2010 to determine the success of the pilot and make recommendations on whether it should continue; and
7. Upon successful completion of the pilot, the Parks & Leisure Department accept the transfer of responsibility for monitoring the agreement.

### Abbreviations

**SFC** Shankill Football Club"

It was pointed out that the management of the Parks and Leisure Department were content to accept responsibility for the monitoring of the agreement and that a report thereon would be submitted to the Parks and Leisure Committee in May.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Neighbourhood Renewal Programme Funding –  
Voluntary Advice Provider Posts**

The Community Development Manager informed the Members that, as a result of a review of the funding which the Belfast Regeneration Office provided under the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, that organisation had identified that it was paying for voluntary advice provider posts. The Voluntary Community Unit within the Department for Social Development, which was responsible for the administration of Community Support Plan funding to District Councils, had proposed that, in future, local authorities fund such posts through the Advice and Information strand of the Plan. She reported that a number of voluntary advice provider posts in Belfast would be affected by this change. The Voluntary Community Unit would be prepared to make the necessary changes in order to transfer the administration of the funding of these posts from the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme to the Community Support Plan, if the Council agreed to the change.

She pointed out that, given the current economic situation, there was an increasing demand for these types of services provided by advice-giving organisations. Therefore, the voluntary advice provider posts were of considerable importance to the City's residents. She explained that the funding for the posts would be provided to the Council by the Voluntary Community Unit and then ring-fenced within the Council's Community Support Plan budget. However, the posts would only be secured whilst the Council continued to receive funding for them under the Community Support Plan.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the administration of the funding for the voluntary advice posts be transferred from the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme to the Community Support Plan.

**Waterfront and Ulster Halls Marketing Services Contract**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“Relevant Background Information**

**In May 2006 a contract for the provision of marketing services to the Belfast Waterfront was awarded for an initial one year period, further renewable for a maximum of two additional years. This option was taken up.**

**The contract is now due to expire on 30 April 2009.**

**With the reopening of the Ulster Hall and the strategy of joint promotion adopted for the two venues, a new contract arrangement is now required to cover marketing activities for both venues.**

**Furthermore, with recent changes in the Council's Branding Strategy and the expansion of the role of Corporate Communications, particularly in the field of advertising, there is a need to reassess the services required from a contractor.**

### Key Issues

In order to progress the appointment of a new contractor, yet retain a relationship with the existing contractor in the interim period, the following course of action is proposed.

#### 1. Extension of the current contract for Belfast Waterfront Hall

Extension of the current contract to cover the period up to 30 June 2009 would allow advertising and other promotional activity to continue, pending the appointment of a new contractor.

As a new listings guide (the main element of expenditure) will not be required until August 2009 this is likely to involve only minimal work.

#### 2. Ulster Hall

A large proportion of the design and advertising work required for the reopening of the Ulster Hall was carried out by the contractor appointed to design the interpretive displays within the venue.

Some additional work was also awarded to this designer in order to retain continuity of design.

It is proposed that this arrangement should continue until a new contractor is appointed.

#### 3. Appointment of New Contractor for the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls

Approval is sought from Committee to seek tenders using the criteria detailed below. Approval is also sought from Committee for delegated authority for the Director of Development to award the tender in line with the criteria.

The new Marketing Services contract should relate to both Belfast Waterfront and the Ulster Hall.

There will be some substantive changes from the previous contract, notably:

- The opportunity to address how the Waterfront and Ulster Hall 'brands' work together;
- A requirement to address the Belfast brand in all design work;

- A reduction in the advertising brief for the contractor – design of advertising will remain within this brief, whereas the negotiation of advertising rates and placing of advertising will revert to Belfast City Council;
- A requirement to consider the implications of all marketing activity in relation to digital marketing opportunities and to work with Belfast City Council to ensure this is carried through.

The core work covered by the contract will involve:

- Design (and print management) of a listings guide for both venues;
- Design of corporate advertising (conference and entertainments markets) for each venue individually but also together
- Design of event related advertising for relevant entertainments events

Evaluation of the tenders received will be based on the following criteria:

- Cost
- Design Concepts
- Technical capability, including relevant experience
- Commitment (past and current customers' perceptions of service provided on similar completed contracts)
- Understanding of the markets served, i.e. entertainments / conferences and meetings
- Budget management proposals
- Percentage mark-up on third party costs
- Financial capability and standing
- Environmental management/impact

### Resource Implications

#### Financial

As part of the operating budget for the Waterfront and Ulster Hall a budget for design and marketing work has been set at £35,000 per annum. Tender submissions will be assessed as to how they address this budget.

### Recommendations

Committee approval is sought:

1. That Committee note the contents of the report
2. To seek tenders using the criteria detailed in the report.



3. That Committee approve the proposed plan of action in the appointment of a new contractor.
4. For delegated authority for the Director of Development to award the tender in line with the criteria.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Ulster Hall**

Arising from discussion in the foregoing matter, a Member indicated that he had been concerned to see during a recent visit to the Ulster Hall that damp was visible on a number of the internal walls of the recently refurbished building. He was concerned also that the only method of accessing seats on the ground floor was through the central aisle, which was resulting in congestion at concerts and events. In response, the Head of City Events and Venues indicated that the dampness had resulted from lime plaster being applied to the walls during the refurbishment. This product had been used in order to ensure that the work was undertaken in keeping with the manner in which the building had been constructed originally. With the Hall being used once again for events, the heat in the building was drawing water which had seeped into the brickwork due to its poor state of repair prior to the refurbishment. He informed the Members that, as part of the contract, the reinstatement work would be undertaken when the walls had dried out.

In connection with the seating issue, the Head of City Events and Venues indicated that, since the refurbishment of the Ulster Hall had reduced the number of seats which were available in the balcony, it had been decided, in order to maximise the revenue which the Hall could generate, to provide only a central aisle on the ground floor thereby allowing for additional seats to be provided. He assured the Committee that this change was not in contravention of any health and safety legislation. However, given the Member's remarks, he undertook to examine the issue again.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided by the Head of City Events and Venues.

### **World Police and Firefighter Games 2013**

The Head of City Events and Venues reminded the Committee that the Council was one of the key bodies responsible for the organisation of the above-mentioned Games which would be held in Belfast.

He reported that the Lord Mayor had been invited to participate in a delegation from Northern Ireland which would be attending the 2009 World Police and Firefighter Games in Vancouver, Canada, in order to view the facilities being used in that City and to promote the 2013 event. The delegation would include the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure and representatives from his Department, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Prison Service, the Fire and Rescue Service and Sport Northern Ireland. The cost of sending one person on the trip had been estimated at £2,500.

The Head of City Events and Venues recommended, given that Belfast would be hosting the 2013 Games, that the Lord Mayor and the Head of City Events and Venues (or their nominees), participate in the delegation to the 2009 World Police and Fire Fighter Games in Vancouver from 31st July till 3rd August.

The Committee adopted the recommendation and authorised the payment of the necessary costs in connection therewith.

### **Economic Development Unit - Update**

#### **European Social Fund Projects**

(Councillors Cunningham, Lavery and C. Maskey declared an interest in this matter, in that they sat on the Board of one of the organisations seeking assistance, Councillor Ekin declared an interest also in his capacity as landlord of one of the organisations and they left the meeting whilst the matter was under discussion.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“Relevant Background Information**

Members will be aware that, at the March 2009 meeting of the Development Committee, it was agreed that a decision on the recommendation not to proceed with year two funding for three European Social Fund projects would be deferred and that officers should bring back a report to the April 2009 Committee exploring options for funding these projects.

#### **Key Issues**

At the February 2008 meeting of the Development Committee Members agreed to three requests to match fund European Social Fund projects.

The approval was for one years funding only and was subject to each of the parties meeting targets as indicated in their applications.

The financial requests and targets were as follows (all figures from February 2009):

#### **LEAP (Local Employment Action Programme):**

Match-funding of £48,848 requested (but subsequently revised downwards to £41,615 due to a delay in the start date).

Target: 44 clients registered and 18 people into employment.

Actual performance: 67 clients registered (152% of target) and four people into employment (22%) of target.

**Stepping Stones Work 4 U:**

Match-funding of £32,665 requested.

Target: 75 clients registered and 17 to find employment.

Actual performance: 28 clients registered (37% of target) and five clients found employment (29% of target).

**Women into Business**

Match-funding of £30,491 requested.

Targets included: 505 women to join the network over a three year period; 2,000 hits on the website and 200 women to receive mentoring.

Actual performance: the project start date was delayed and therefore the focus of year 1 activity has been on recruiting the coordinator and setting up the website therefore no targets have been met.

Members should be aware that Belfast City Council did not launch a call for match-funding requests. The project call for ESF applications was launched by the Department for Employment and Learning in October 2007 and it was the responsibility of the project promoter to ensure that they had match-funding in place. At the project submission stage, we were only aware that two of these projects, LEAP and Stepping Stones Work 4 U, had intended to identify Belfast City Council as a possible match-funder. Both projects were aware that this commitment was subject to Committee approval.

All ESF projects are of three year duration. Match-funding is requested on a year by year basis. To date the projects have indicated that the Belfast City Council match contribution spend by March 2009 is:

- LEAP: £26,959.45 (underspend of £14,656)
- Stepping Stones Work 4 U: £32,665 (no underspend)
- Women into Business: £22,814 (underspend of £7,605)

The three projects have now approached Belfast City Council to ask for continued match-funding for 2009-2010. The figures requested are as follows:

- LEAP: £44,848
- Stepping Stones Work 4 U: £50,192
- Women into Business: £27,605

Members should be aware that the match-funding for the Women into Business project is only 50% of the match-funding (or 17.5% of the overall) budget for this financial year. The other 17.5% will be met by Invest NI.

**Commitment beyond year one- legal advice**

We have been advised by our Legal Services Department that we have no legal commitment to fund the organisations beyond year one, given that the original commitment was for one year only, up to a maximum amount. It has also been confirmed that, as the approval was subject to the projects meeting their agreed targets, none of which have done so, we would have some justification in withholding payment, if we chose to do so.

**Additional request for support**

At the March 2009 Development Committee Members were reminded that there were 47 ESF projects in total in the Belfast area and that we could not rule out the possibility that some of these projects would not approach us for year two funding. Since that meeting, we have received a request for match-funding from Training for Women Network (TWN). Their Advancement of Women programme is a Northern Ireland-wide initiative but they have asked Belfast City Council to match-fund three elements of the Belfast region's costs. These are as follows:

- Provision of Employability training - target of 500 women in Belfast City Council area to undertake employability training. The match-funding request is for £17,500.
- Training Development - development and delivery of bespoke training programmes for a range of specific groups e.g. Migrant Women Employability programme, Women Survivors of Conflict programme, Women Returning to Work programme.  
Match-funding request: £3,500
- Young Women's Inspirational Conference 2010 - aimed at young women from disadvantaged areas aged 16-18. This event helps signpost delegates towards vocational careers and training and provides general advice to encourage continued education and training.  
Match-funding of £12,500 sought towards the event.

The total match-funding contribution sought by TWN for their Advancement of Women ESF project is £33,500 for the financial year 2009-2010. This brings the total ESF match-funding requests received to date to £156,145.

At this time we cannot be certain that another project may or may not make a funding request to us. At this stage no provision has been made in the budget beyond year one.

### Options for identification of funding

As requested by Members at the March 2009 meeting of the Development Committee, we have sought to identify a number of activities in the draft 2009-2010 Economic Development Business Plan that Members may wish to review in order to allow these projects to progress.

#### 1. Citywide employability and skills plan

At the December 2008 Development Committee, Members agreed to a proposal to open discussions with DEL and other key skills and employability partners in order to develop an agreed strategy for the City. Contacts have commenced and the first meeting of the citywide group had been scheduled for 21 May 2009. However it is clear that there is an imperative to advance some joint activity to address the more immediate effects of the downturn and we are working with partners on this as well.

Within the 2009-2010 EDU budget, £190,000 has been set aside for the work on citywide employability and skills plan. It is intended that these resources will be used to both pump-prime activity and to lever in additional, more significant support from other partners. Although the nature of the activity is yet to be defined, it is anticipated that this will contribute towards activities as part of a short term response to the economic downturn as well as a range of pilot actions to address worklessness.

#### 2. Enterprise Support

At present, a sum of £140,000 has been included in the EDU business plan for enterprise support activity in the financial year 2009-2010. This is planned to be spent on a range of activities such as BEN (Belfast Entrepreneurs Network) workshops and networking events (up to 30 events), support for Young Enterprise NI, a primary programme initiative for pre-enterprise in the social economy sector and enterprise outreach work in community venues and localities, as well as mentoring support for up to 40 new companies to help them through the initial start-up phase and a student graduate mentoring initiative to offer one-to-one specialist support to complement the training received as part of the certificate of Entrepreneurship and the new MSc in New Venture Creation which is scheduled to start in the 09-10 academic year.

The new Small Business Support Programme contract has just been awarded to Enterprise NI - an umbrella grouping of the Local Enterprise Agencies across the region. This programme will be implemented from April 2009 and the target for the Greater Belfast area is around 500 participants.

A recent report on Belfast undertaken by the Centre for Cities indicated a disjointed enterprise framework and identified the need for greater collaboration in this regard. The GEM (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor) report for the region indicates that entrepreneurial activities here remain lower than all other UK regions. Female entrepreneurship remains lower than the UK average while the number of 25-34 year olds displaying entrepreneurial activity was above the UK average for the first time since 2002. Graduates here are almost at the bottom of the league when it comes to business start levels. This indicates the need for a focused, coordinated programme of activity in the coming year, bearing in mind the challenging economic conditions. We have organised a meeting with Enterprise NI to agree such an approach for the coming year.

The remainder of the EDU budget has been allocated towards sectoral development initiatives (e.g. Creative Industries, manufacturing, environmental and retail) as well as generic business development initiatives focusing on issues such as strategic development, sales growth and export development. A recent survey of 500 businesses in the Belfast City Council area has identified these as priority areas of support for local companies.

#### **Resource Implications**

Total amount requested from four projects: £156,145

#### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to consider how they wish to proceed with this matter and deal with the four applications for match funding.

#### **Abbreviations**

ESF- European Social Fund  
LEAP- Local Employment Action Programme  
TWN- Training for Women Network  
BEN- Belfast Entrepreneur Network  
GEM- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor  
DEL- Department for Employment and Learning”

The Head of Economic Initiatives advised the Committee that, whilst the four projects were worthy, the Development Department had not made provision in its Revenue Estimates for groups participating in European Social Fund projects to receive financial assistance, as the funding which had been provided in 2008 to such organisations had been for one year only. She reminded the Committee that the three groups which had been funded in the previous year had not met their targets.

She pointed out that, if the Committee agreed to support the four groups this year, it was likely that they would seek funding again in 2010 from the Council, since the European Social Fund projects were of three years' duration. She explained that the Council's response to the economic downturn required the Economic Development Unit to undertake a City-wide Employability and Skills Plan and to provide enterprise support to small businesses and that it was likely that this work would be adversely affected should the Committee agree to fund the four requests.

During discussion, several Members pointed out that the Council, at a special meeting on 9th April, had agreed that it would work with the key training providers in the City to offer opportunities for re-training to people facing redundancy and that the four organisations which had requested funding were undertaking such work. It was, therefore, incumbent upon the Council to assist these four groups. The Committee should, therefore, ensure that the necessary money was found to enable it to accede to the requests. In addition, it was suggested that it would be important for Council officials to meet urgently with representatives from the Department of Enterprise and Learning regarding its European Social Fund projects scheme and the potential for more groups to approach the Council requesting financial assistance and that the matter should be discussed by the Economic Downturn Task Group which the Committee had established at its meeting on 11th March.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed:

- (1) to provide funding for the 2009/10 year to the organisations as set out below:

Local Employment Action Programme - £44,848

Stepping Stones Work 4 U - £50,192

Women into Business - £27,605

Training for Women Network - £33,500;

- (2) that these four groups receive financial assistance from the Council in the current financial year only; and
- (3) that as a condition of the funding offer the four groups must agree that they will not request any further money from the Council in connection with the 2010/11 aspect of their European Social Fund projects.

### **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 December, 2008 till February, 2009.

**Core Cities**

The Committee was informed that the Lord Mayor had received recently an invitation for Belfast to become an associate member of the Core Cities Group. This organisation had been established in 2000 to assist Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, Newcastle, Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol and Gateshead to work together on common issues and to lobby Central Government to re-direct funding for economic regeneration away from London and the South-East of England. As a result, a number of joint initiatives had been undertaken on issues relating to transport, regeneration and employability. The Head of Economic Initiatives indicated that Cardiff, Edinburgh and Glasgow had also been invited to join this prestigious Group and that associate, rather than "full" membership, had been offered to the four cities since Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland had their own Regional Assemblies.

She pointed out that joining the Core Cities Group would enable the Council to share information with and obtain information from the other cities which were members of the organisation which would be beneficial to Belfast. She pointed out further that the Council had not been requested to make any financial contribution and that "full" membership could only be offered to English cities.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the Lord Mayor decline the invitation for Belfast to become an associate member of the Core Cities Group.

Chairman