

Development Committee

Wednesday, 10th June, 2009

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Humphrey (Chairman); and
Councillors M. Browne, Campbell, Convery, Crozier,
Cunningham, Ekin, N. Kelly, C. Maskey, P. Maskey,
McCausland, Mhic Giolla Mhín, Mullaghan and Rodgers

In attendance: Ms. M. T. McGivern, Director of Development; and
Mr. N. Malcolm, Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Lavery) and Councillors Kyle and O'Reilly.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 13th and 26th May 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 June. It was reported further that, during discussion of the minute of the meeting of 13th May under the heading "Council's Transport Policy Review", the Council had requested that the Committee consider the implications of the transport proposals contained in the Connswater Community Greenway scheme in light of the Council's Transport Policy.

Mr. Michael Stoker

The Chairman referred to a recent incident in Afghanistan in which Councillor Stoker's son, Michael, had been seriously injured and, on behalf of the Committee, wished Michael a speedy recovery from his injuries.

Expression of Sympathy

The Chairman informed the Committee of the recent death of the father of the Head of Economic Initiatives, Ms. S. McCay, and, on behalf of the Committee, extended his deepest sympathy and condolences to Ms. McCay and her family circle.

Core Cities

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 20th April under the heading "Core Cities" which had been taken back at the Council meeting on 5th May at the request of Councillor Crozier and which the Committee, at its meeting on 13th May, had agreed to defer for a period of one month. An extract of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

“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.”

Councillor Crozier informed the Committee that the Core Cities Group had considerable influence within the United Kingdom and it helped shape the Government’s agenda and he therefore believed that it would be beneficial for the Council to accept the invitation for Belfast to become an associate member of the Core Cities Group.

In answer to a Member’s question, the Director informed the Committee that Cardiff, Edinburgh and Glasgow, which had also been invited to join the organisation as associate members, had agreed to accept the invitation for a short period of time in order to ascertain whether they obtained any benefit from being a member of the organisation.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to rescind its decision of 20th April and agreed to become an associate member of the Core Cities Group for a period of one year.

Belfast Tourism Monitor

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 13th May, it had agreed to receive from representatives of Millward Brown Ulster Limited a presentation in respect of the findings of the Belfast Tourism Monitor 2008. It was reported that Ms. C. Toner and Mr. R. McGimpsey were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Ms. Toner stated that in 2008 7.1 million people had visited the City, an increase of 3% from the previous year, with the number of out-of-state visitors increasing by 43%. She indicated that these visitors had spent £436.5 million in the City, an increase of 39%. She pointed out that the considerable increase was due largely to residents from the Republic of Ireland visiting Belfast to shop because of the beneficial exchange rate between the Euro and the Pound Sterling. Conversely, the number of visitors from England, Scotland and Wales had declined by 20%. She explained that 30% of all visitors to Belfast had used the Big Wheel attraction located at the City Hall. She indicated that the questionnaires which had been completed by visitors had indicated that Belfast could become an even more attractive destination if there were more information available regarding what was happening in the City, more attractions for people to visit and if opening hours were to be extended.

In answer to Members' questions, Ms. Toner pointed out that visitors to the City were no longer indicating that there was a shortage of hotel rooms and that the figure for the total number of visitors to Belfast included day-trippers, given the contribution which they made to the City's economy, although the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's figures only included out-of-state and overnight visitors.

Ms. Toner and Mr. McGimpsey then retired from the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee noted the findings of the Belfast Tourism Monitor for 2008.

Neighbourhood Renewal

The Committee noted the contents of the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that, in June 2003, the DSD published 'People and Place: A strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal', a document which aims to tackle the complex, multi-dimensional nature of Northern Ireland's most disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods. In order to progress this Agenda, DSD progressed the establishment of 12 Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships within the BCC area. Each Partnership was tasked with producing a Vision Framework (7-10 years) and Action Plan (3 years) for the Neighbourhood Renewal area. The 12 Partnerships are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| - Inner East Belfast | - Inner South Belfast |
| - South West Belfast | - Greater Shankill |
| - Greater Falls | - Lenadoon |
| - Upper Springfield | - Crumlin/Ardoyne |
| - Inner North Belfast | - Andersonstown |
| - Ligoniel | - Upper Ardoyne/Ballysillan |

Each Partnership has developed its Action Plan which has been submitted to DSD for consideration. These Plans propose thousands of actions that would need to be delivered by a range of organisations in key areas such as housing, health, education, community safety, good relations, employability, community development, culture, tourism, leisure, children and young people, older people and environmental and physical improvement.

Key Issues

The Council has become a key participant in the neighbourhood renewal process and to date the following support has been provided:-

- Officer participation provided on all 12 Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships through Community Services.
- Action Plan responses prepared for each of the 12 Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships Action Plans.
- Established a Neighbourhood Renewal Working Group comprising Council Neighbourhood Renewal representatives and representatives from Council Departments.
- Formal presentations and workshops delivered to the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships.
- Creation of a Neighbourhood Renewal Database detailing all key actions and implications for the Council in the neighbourhood renewal process.
- Neighbourhood Development Officers in place to co-ordinate the delivery of actions within each Plan.
- Commitment to deliver on neighbourhood renewal is embedded within the new Corporate Plan.
- Provision of SNAP area-based intelligence to support the neighbourhood renewal process.
- Neighbourhood renewal information directories prepared for the Partnerships detailing Council services and key staff working in the local area.
- Development of the neighbourhood renewal section of the Council website, creating a central repository for all Action Plans and responses.
- Integration of neighbourhood renewal within the Council's SNAP/Local Area Working agenda.
- On-going work with BRO regarding the development of a pilot partnership approach to the implementation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan in Lenadoon. Proposals will be presented to Committee in due course.

**Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans:
Implications for BCC**

To date, co-ordinated responses have been prepared for the 12 Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans. Belfast City Council has been highlighted as having a lead or a supporting role in nearly 600 specific actions regarding service delivery at a neighbourhood level. Whilst the majority of these can be addressed via co-ordination with the Council Departments there are still a number of issues that need to be considered within this, including:-

- The Council has been identified as a key player in the implementation of neighbourhood renewal activity whilst all of the Action Plans have been developed the main challenge is ensuring successful implementation.
- There are large differences in the number of actions identified within each Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan, which highlights varying levels of capacity.
- There are a number of key BCC service areas that have been identified as a priority in the neighbourhood renewal plans, which includes local economic development, community safety, community services, youth provision, alley-gating, physical renewal, cleansing, good relations, parks, sport and leisure, older people, well-being and the provision of advice services at a local level. This requires significant co-ordination.
- The Council alone cannot deliver on these 600 specified actions as other organisations have also been asked to contribute alongside these actions. This means that there is a need to build/work in partnership with a range of other partners, including statutory organisations, in order to successfully deliver neighbourhood renewal.
- The neighbourhood renewal areas do not align with any existing Council boundaries which can make monitoring or planning work difficult.
- Most Council services are not currently structured or planned on a local basis which can make it challenging to respond to the programme.
- Many of the existing Plans are already being reviewed at different times which also makes co-ordination difficult.
- The likely transfer of neighbourhood renewal responsibility to Councils through the Review of Public Administration.

Resource Implications

Human Resources

Co-ordinated by the SNAP Manager.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of the report.

Key to Abbreviations

NR	Neighbourhood Renewal
NRPs	Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships
NRA	Neighbourhood Renewal Area
NRAP	Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan
NDO	Neighbourhood Development Officer
SNAP	Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme
YENI	Young Enterprise Northern Ireland
DSD	Department for Social Development
BRO	Belfast Regeneration Office
LIAG	Local Implementation Action Group
MUGA	Multi-Use Games Area
ASB	Anti Social Behaviour
CC	Community Centre
PACT	Partners and Communities Together
LOTS	Living over the Shops
SRF	Strategic Regeneration Framework
HUB	Hybrid Use Building.”

Glen Community Complex

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The Glen Community Complex (known as the Bacon Factory) is a community facility located on the Suffolk Road in the Lenadoon area of the City. The existing Complex is currently within the ownership of North & West Housing Limited and is in need of a substantial upgrade. The aim of the re-development is to provide a ‘fit for purpose’ community facility that will create a shared space at the Lenadoon/Suffolk community interface and will support the delivery of various priorities within the Neighbourhood Renewal Area. Upon completion of this project it is proposed that the ownership of the project will be transferred to a management board that will consist of representatives from the Lenadoon Community Forum and the Suffolk Community Forum.

DSD’s BRO West team had agreed to undertake this project on behalf of the Lenadoon/Suffolk community and an application was made to SEUPB for Peace III monies to secure the project. This application was successful with an offer of £4,595,693 from SEUPB and £500,000 secured from Atlantic Philanthropies. A full detail of the project can be found on Modern.gov.

Key Issues

In December 2008, DSD approached the Council to advise that, due to a legal issue, they did not have statutory authority to act as a project promoter for the Bacon Factory site in so far as that term refers to an organisation taking receipt of EU funding (to itself) acquire land and to build and own community/commercial facility.

To this end, given that DSD were no longer in a position to deliver the project, they requested that BCC consider taking on project promotion of the Bacon Factory development. SEUPB has indicated that this would be their preferred option in order to ensure that the project is completed within funding timescales and the project isn't jeopardised.

Following liaison with BCC officers it was agreed that the Council would undertake a due diligence exercise to ensure that all risks, costs and long term commitments to the project have been considered to enable Members to take a fully informed decision on how to move forward.

The assessment identified a number of key risks concerning scheme delivery, site ownership, site acquisition, scheme design, planning permission, procurement, construction period, long term sustainability and whole life cycle costs for the Council.

Given the risks identified, a number of options have been identified as a means of bringing the project forward.

Option 1: BCC acts as project promoter – preferred DSD and SEUPB position

The Council would be responsible for all EU funding management and ensuring delivery within the agreed timetable, site acquisition, planning, construction, ownership and management of the building upon completion. Given that this is EU funding, the Council would need to be in a position to front load funding the programme and to claim back retrospectively.

This is considered as a high risk for BCC to consider.

Option 2: North & West Housing Ltd act as project promoter

North & West Housing Ltd currently owns the site and has confirmed their willingness to act as project promoter. They would be responsible for all of the activities highlighted above. However, they are in an advantageous position as they already own the site and are willing to undertake development activity which will assist

with funding timescale specifications. North & West Housing would continue to own the building and provide a long term lease to community groups at a peppercorn rent. SEUPB will have to determine the eligibility of North & West Housing to be project promoter and a recipient of EU monies.

This is the preferred option for North & West Housing as they want to retain ownership and are anxious to move forward with development. This option provides the least risk to the Council.

Option 3: North & West Housing act as project promoter with DSD and BCC providing an oversight management role.

North & West Housing would assume the role of project promoter and retain ownership of the building. The offer from SEUPB would include a condition that DSD and BCC would have legitimate oversight and management responsibility for the project which would include addressing issues such as compliance with Shared Future requirements, as detailed in Peace III funding requirements, corporate governance, project completion and spend profile. This is to ensure sufficient rigour to allow completion of the project and to achieve spend targets set by SEUPB.

This option is feasible as a way to move the project forward with all parties involved and further detail would be required regarding the role of BCC within such a corporate governance framework.

Based on the three options identified, Members are asked to give consideration to the most suitable option for moving the Bacon Factory project forward.

Resource Implications

Human Resources

Co-ordinated by the SNAP Manager.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Note the contents of the report; and
2. Agree to the most appropriate option for delivery of the Bacon Factory project

Decision Tracking

Recommendation 2:

Following approval by Committee, the development of a project plan for the preferred option selected will be actioned by Siobhan Watson, SNAP Manager.

Time line: November 2009

Reporting Officer: Marie Thérèse McGivern

Key to Abbreviations

DSD	Department for Social Development
BRO	Belfast Regeneration Office
SEUPB	Special EU Programmes Body

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that Option 2 outlined in the report would be the most appropriate method of delivering a community facility at the Glen Community Complex and authorised the officers to proceed on that basis.

Economic Downturn Task Group

The Director reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 11th March, it had agreed that a joint Member/officer task group be established to monitor and develop the work which would be undertaken as part of the Committee's response to the economic downturn.

She reported that the Group's first meeting had been held on 12th May and she outlined a number of the issues which had been discussed and the resultant actions which would be undertaken by the Development Department in the coming months. She reported also that the following matters would be discussed at future meetings of the Task Group:

- (i) ensuring that the work which the Council was undertaking obtained as wide a coverage as possible;
- (ii) the need to have a joint meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources and Development Committees to discuss the economic downturn;
- (iii) to examine the role which taxi drivers and tour bus operators undertook in relation to tourism within the City; and
- (iv) the Development Committee consider the economic review of Belfast, which had been undertaken by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which had been deferred at its meeting on 12th November, 2008.

Following discussion, the Committee noted the information provided by the Director.

Arising from discussion in the matter, the Committee requested that, following the changes made to the Committee membership at the Annual Meeting of Council, the Party Group Leaders be requested to re-examine the nominations which they had made to the Economic Downturn Task Group.

Departmental Grant Aid Review

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the Development Department was joined by Community Services and the Waterfront and Ulster Halls in April, 2007. As a result, a plan for the re-structuring of the whole Department was developed and endorsed by Committee in June 2007.

The plan included the complete review of 7 units: Waterfront Hall/Ulster Hall; Community Services; Business Support; Events; Arts and Tourism; Policy and the Markets.

In addition, the reviews would bring forward a re-structured Department and would seek to create unified systems and processes.

The plan also included the reformulation of the Capital City II strategy to include the new elements now in the Department. One of the identified processes was a review of grant aid provision and the desire to rationalise and unify, as far as possible, the existing grant streams.

Key Issues

The change management process within the Department has had major successes. A new strategy was confirmed by the end of 2007 and the various service unit reviews were also completed. However due to the complexity of the issues, approval for the re-structuring was not achieved until September 2008 and that new structure is currently being completed.

On the systems side, major change has been achieved to create single and unified approaches to business processing and performance management. As a result of this workload the Grants review has taken longer than was at first envisaged, but the process is now complete and the report seeks to set out the way forward and get approval for the next stages.

The current grant and funding streams in the Department are outlined on Modern.gov. The portfolio is a wide one and analysis indicated that practice was very different between the various schemes. In particular, there were different systems in place and differing approaches to criteria, management information, performance management, review and evaluation. It was clear that duplication and waste of resources was evident and that better alignment and outcomes could be achieved. In addition, when placed beside each other it was also deemed not to be user-friendly and had the potential for confusion to those who might seek to access grant aid.

In moving forward towards a new approach the following principles were used:

- The maximisation of community benefit;
- The simplification of the model to assist those seeking funding;
- Ensuring value for money, especially in relation to administration;
- Creating clear linkage between resourcing and need; and
- Putting in place strong frameworks for review and evaluation.

To achieve this a 3-point process has been developed, which subdivides a total pot of £3,565,693 into 3 tranches:

1. A new Community Access Fund for grants under £10K.

This would bring together the current streams of Community Development projects, Seasonal Play scheme, Community Chest, Rolling Programme for the Arts and Support for Sport into one new Access fund with a common application form and criteria based on building and supporting community activity.

The fund would currently stand at £323K.

2. An Annual Grants Fund

This would bring together the current streams of Community Revenue, Annual Arts Grants and Development and Outreach into one annual grants process with different application forms, but review criteria in relation to maximising community and organisational capacity building.

The fund would currently stand at £1,100,000.

3. A Multi-Annual Fund

This would maintain the already existing Multi-Annual Arts fund and would introduce the multi-annual concept to community grants under the existing Advice Services and Capacity Building streams. In addition, the Revenue (non-Grant) scheme would also become a multi-annual scheme.

This would create a current Fund of £2,122,703.

The whole process will be underpinned by the setting up of a Central Grants Unit to administer all grant aid so ensuring common practice and standards and separating out grant decision-making from administration and review. The Unit will be enabled through the current re-structuring process.

In order to move forward Members' approval is sought in principle to:

- Work up the framework for a new Community Access Fund, including application form;
- Work through the implications of an Annual Funding stream.
- Work through the implications of a Multi-Annual Funding stream;
- Devise systems and structures, as appropriate.
- Members are also asked to agree a series of Party Briefings and the possibility of a Special Committee in August or September to consider the new framework.

Resource Implications

The Department currently dispenses £3,565,693 in grant aid in any year.

Recommendations

That Members:

- Agree in principle, to moving forward as outlined in the report;
- Agree to Party Briefings on the matter;
- Agree to a Special Committee to finally approve a new framework in August/September 2009.

Decision Tracking

Further to agreement and ratification that a approval of a new framework be sought at a Special Committee.

**Timeframe: August/September 2009
Reporting Officer: Marie-Thérèse McGivern”**

The Director informed the Committee that the Community Festivals Fund had not been included within the Review as the funding was distributed in accordance with guidelines issued by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. In answer to Members' questions, she indicated that the Review had resulted in the rationalisation of the number of staff involved in grant making and that work which was being undertaken by the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme Unit had identified the elimination of duplications which would assist the Department to ensure that grant aid was awarded more effectively.

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

Literary Tourism

The Director reminded the Committee that the Cultural Tourism Strategy aimed to support the development of new cultural tourism product and to make specific areas of culture and heritage more accessible to visitors. She explained that literary tourism dealt with places and events from fictional texts as well as the lives of their authors. She pointed out that there was considerable potential for the development of literary tourism in Belfast, which currently contributed at least £2.6 billion per annum to the United Kingdom economy, since the City's literary heritage had an important role to play within Belfast's tourism product and was an important dimension in the marketing of Belfast as an international destination.

The Director reported that the Tourism Development Unit had obtained support from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Tourism Ireland and the Arts Council for Northern Ireland to work in partnership with those organisations to develop literary tourism in Belfast, which would include the following new products and initiatives:

- (i) the development of literary tours and trails, together with an MP3 tour which would be downloadable from a website to enable visitors to take a self-guided tour of Belfast's literary highlights;
- (ii) the establishment of partnerships and networks with all current providers to develop and promote literary tourism;
- (iii) increasing and developing literary events; and
- (iv) the effective marketing of literary tourism.

She recommended that the Committee agree to develop literary tourism within Belfast at a cost of £58,000, provision for which had been included within the Department's budgets.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Belfast Shopping Festival 2009

The Committee was reminded that the Belfast Shopping Festival 2009 had taken place across the City during April. It had been a major initiative to support the retail sector by providing them with a platform to promote their business and attract new customers. Many local retail businesses had participated in the Festival which had encompassed a mixture of competitions, promotions, street entertainment, in-store activities and a fashion show in Smithfield Market. It had involved the Council working in partnership with a number of organisations, including Belfast City Centre Management, the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, the Departments of Regional Development and Social Development, the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce and arts and retail groups throughout the City.

The aim of the Festival had been to showcase the diverse shopping offer within the City, to encourage people to experience Belfast as a shopping destination and to explore the areas beyond the City centre. As these aims had been achieved, there was general agreement that the Belfast Shopping Festival 2009 had been a success.

Noted.

Festivals Action Plan

The Director reminded the Committee that the former Development (Arts) Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 6th August, 2004, had agreed to the establishment of a Belfast Festivals Forum in order to develop such events in the City. She reported that the Forum had been endorsed by both large and small scale festival organisations within the City and that, currently, it had over 100 members from a wide range of groups. The Festivals Forum had developed a Belfast Festivals Calendar, produced a large quantity of promotional materials and had undertaken an annual programme of tailored skills development and training which was designed to build capacity within festival organisations.

She reported that the Forum had developed a Draft Festivals Action Plan for the 2009-2010 year which aimed to provide training and skills development, networking opportunities and sponsorship. It was intended that bespoke training in carnival skills would be undertaken in order to develop the carnival product within the City, that tailored training in new and innovative methods of marketing, which would be effective in the current economic climate, would be undertaken, that ten organisations would receive a tailored mentoring service in an area which they felt would most benefit them and a further ten organisations would receive marketing training in partnership with the Arts and Business organisation. In addition, a sponsorship convention for 150 delegates would be held.

The Director indicated that it had been estimated that the cost of implementing the Festivals Action Plan was £30,000 and she recommended that the Committee provide that amount which could be accommodated from within the Department's current budgets.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

400th Anniversary of the 1613 Charter

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 13th May, it had agreed in principle to host a symposium for a wide range of stakeholders in order to discuss how the 400th Anniversary of the granting in 1613 of a Charter to Belfast could be celebrated. The Committee had been informed that a report providing details of the symposium and its associated costs would be submitted for consideration at its meeting in June.

The Director pointed out that, in 2007, the 400th Anniversary of the settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, in the United States of America had been celebrated on a large scale, with both the Queen and President Bush attending the event. It has been recognised that there were relevant comparisons between the settlements of Ulster and Virginia and, therefore, it was intended that the programme of events to mark the 400th Anniversary of the granting of the Charter to Belfast would be based on the experiences from Virginia, using a good relations approach as well as examining issues from a local perspective.

She informed the Members that the estimated cost of holding the symposium would be £11,200 and that the event would be held in the Ulster Hall. She reported that speakers who had confirmed attendance included people who had been involved in the 2007 events at Jamestown, Virginia together with a Professor from Queen's University. She reported further that initial discussions had been held with other Councils in Northern Ireland which were intending to celebrate the anniversaries of their Charters and with the Honourable the London Society and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. In addition, Coleraine Borough Council had indicated that it was prepared to lead on the programme outside Belfast.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided by the Director and authorised expenditure of a sum not to exceed £11,220 in connection with the holding of the symposium in November.

Renewing the Routes

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

This report provides an update on the 2008/9 progress for the Renewing the Routes programme; seeks endorsement of proposed amendments to identified projects within the agreed action plans and provides details in respect of a specific project proposal for commercial improvements.

The first modification to the projects programme relates to the proposed reallocation of approved funding as a response to changed circumstances in respect of increased funding made available from the Belfast Regeneration Office for Shankill Gateway projects.

The second modification relates to the proposed reallocation of approved funding as a response to the growing popularity of the Commercial Improvement Programme on the Springfield Road.

The specific project proposal being brought to the attention of Committee relates to a Commercial Improvement phase of works that would include the Republican Sinn Féin offices on Falls Road.

Key Issues

Overall project performance

Through its Renewing the Routes Programme, the Council continues to develop and lead targeted local urban regeneration. Renewing the Routes represents an innovative inter-agency approach to enhancing the vitality of these roads by developing and implementing integrated regeneration plans. Working with the local community and statutory partners in adopting a phased approach, the Programme initially concentrated on packages of smaller scale environmental or enhancement works. These interventions included new lighting, heritage asset refurbishments, tourism signage, mural removal and replacement, tree planting and landscaping, commercial façade improvements, boundary treatments and investment in open spaces. Financially the project remains on target, with finance provided through the Integrated Development Fund. With an overall capital budget of £3,798,000, the target expenditure for the end of the financial year for March 2009 was met with a projected claim of £1,772,577. The financial target for the current financial year (2009/2010) is just over £2m.

With the goodwill of local businesses and the support of both Elected Members and the community, statutory and voluntary sector, this Programme has progressed and has an ambitious programme for 2009/2010.

Shankill Road

The main emphasis for the regeneration on Shankill Road remains the commercial frontage improvements. Over 35 premises have now taken part in the scheme, with a further 80 businesses in line to benefit in 2009/2010. Completed heritage and conservation projects include feature railings and granite entrance details at the

West Belfast Orange Hall, floodlighting to Woodvale Methodist Church and high quality railings at West Kirk Presbyterian Church. Ongoing works nearing completion include the restoration of the Shankill Rest Garden's perimeter wall, the cleaning of the stonework to Shankill Library and landscaping at Woodvale Presbyterian Church.

Upper Springfield Road

Works are now complete for the environmental project to improve the road frontage and green space area at Springhill Park 'funnel'; works have included new railings, paths, landscaping, planting and future artworks from the community. A project carried out in partnership with Groundwork. Further commercial improvement proposals have been developed from the previous pilot schemes in the area and will be presented to owners/occupiers for final approval in June with work scheduled to commence in July. Planting, public art and boundary improvements have also been completed and additional complementary public realm and landscaping works are at the final design stages.

Crumlin Road

Three phases of the Commercial Improvement Programme covering 41 units at Lower Crumlin Road, Glenbank and Ardoyne are almost complete with a further six unit scheme planned for Carlisle Circus/Gaol area in August 2009. The project to refurbish the Belfast Orange Hall has commenced on-site at Clifton Street along with the public realm improvement scheme at Agnes Street. Draft proposals have been developed for landscaping schemes in Glenbank Drive alongside public realm proposals at the Carlisle Circus and Ardoyne roundabouts.

Falls Update

Two phases of the Lower Falls commercial improvements are complete, covering 61 properties. The third phase for 40 units at Mid Falls is also nearing completion and consultations have commenced for the two phase project at Andersonstown (50 units) for an on-site target of June/July 2009. The feature lighting projects have been completed at Carnegie Library, St Marys University College and the International Wall. The refurbishment works to the listed railings at the St Comgall's site were completed in conjunction with additional landscaping carried out under a separate programme. The work to the entrance of Falls Park is in progress with all re-pointing elements already completed. Specialist refurbishment/repairs to the

stonework will be carried out in July 2009, including reinstating the ornate finials on the pillars. Willowbank Youth Club Environmental Scheme has commenced with gate installation due for June 2009. Further environmental projects are planned for the St Peters Cathedral area and Bog Meadows entrance.

Programme Variations

Members are asked to approve the proposed variations resulting from the continued review of activity and refinement of the final project implementation of the Renewing the Routes Programme.

Shankill Road

The variations proposed are in respect of four previously identified projects at Agnes Street, Tennant Street, Lanark Way and Woodvale Park Gateway sites amounting to £32,935. The original allocations were intended to support small scale environmental projects in these locations. However, as a result of securing £300,000 of additional support from the BRO Physical Development Branch, public realm improvements have been completed on Shankill Road's Junctions and Gateways. Approval is therefore requested for the reallocation of the Gateway funds to supplement the successful Shankill Road Commercial Improvements Projects.

Springfield Road

A reallocation of the agreed Springfield IDF Action Plan budget is proposed to supplement the work proposed for the commercial premises. The reallocation would allow the development of a comprehensive scheme for the implementation of the works in the area and it is proposed that £20,000 of the £35,000 environmental improvement budget be utilised for the planned Commercial Improvement Programme. The Commercial Improvement works continue to be extremely popular and an increased budget would allow a comprehensive scheme covering all the properties and delivering improvement in a vibrant and commercial area on the Springfield Road.

It should be noted that the environmental improvements projects in the original IDF plan have been supplemented by additional works funded by external organisations, including the Arts Council, Groundwork and Invest NI. The remaining budget of £15,000 for environmental improvements would be applied to targeted environmental schemes, including graffiti removal; clearance of derelict spaces and public art.

Specific Project Proposal Information

The specific project proposal being brought to the attention of Committee relates to a Commercial Improvement phase of works that would include the Republican Sinn Féin offices on Falls Road. The Republican Sinn Féin offices are located in a block of premises from 229 Falls Road where it is proposed that a package of works would be carried out as part of the ongoing comprehensive approach to the frontage refurbishments.

The property, which is owned and occupied by Republican Sinn Féin, would benefit from refurbishment works that could include the painting of existing windows and door, render and paint the plinth to the shop front, paint and service existing roller shutter, patch the concrete coping and clean existing tiles and replace any broken tiles. The scope of the enhancement works would also normally include the replacement of any inappropriate signage with more a traditional and coherent design.

Under Section 115A of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 the Council cannot expend monies for political publicity and legal advice, in light of this, is that refurbishment works should be restricted to the façade improvements and exclude any work to the building signage, as the signage relates directly to political publicity.

Resource Implications

There are no additional financial implications arising from the reallocation.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

1. Note the updates set out within the report;
2. Approve the reallocations of the previously agreed budgets of £32,935 in respect of the Gateway areas to supplement the Commercial Improvement budget for the Shankill Road;
3. Approve the reallocations of £20,000 from the previously agreed Environmental Improvements Budget of £35,000 to supplement the Commercial Improvement works proposed for the Springfield Road.
4. Note the proposed actions in respect of the Republican Sinn Féin offices on Falls Road.

Decision Tracking

Recommendations 2 and 3:

Following approval by Committee detailed designs will be produced.

Time line: March 2010

Supporting Officer: Shirley McCay

Key to Abbreviations

BRO Belfast Regeneration Office”

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the matter in relation to the property on the Falls Road owned and occupied by a political party to enable further legal advice to be obtained.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed to reallocate a sum of £32,935 in respect of the Gateway Areas to supplement the Commercial Improvement Budget for the Shankill Road and for a sum of £20,000 from the previously agreed Environmental Improvements Budget of £35,000 being reallocated to supplement the Commercial Improvement Works which were proposed for the Springfield Road.

Community Development Project Grants

The Director 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 to any one group 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 also £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 100 Project Grant applications had been received, 89 of which had been recommended for grant-aid and it was proposed that a total of £41,250 be allocated in this regard.

The Committee considered the applications which had been received and agreed to adopt the recommendations set out below:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRANT APPROVAL

<u>GROUP NAME</u>	<u>REQUESTED</u>	<u>RECOMMENDED</u>
EAST		
Clarawood Community Centre	£500.00	£500.00
Friends of Shankill House	£500.00	£500.00
Lower Woodstock Community Association	£900.00	£500.00
St. Colmcilles Wednesday Club	£500.00	£500.00
Sub Total	£2,400.00	£2,000.00
NORTH		
174 Older Peoples Group	£500.00	£500.00
Ardavon Senior Citizens Group	£500.00	£500.00
Ardoyne Association	£500.00	£500.00
Artillery Young Mothers Group	£1,000.00	£500.00
Ben Madigan Historical Society	£500.00	£500.00
Benview Community Centre	£500.00	£500.00
Brookvale Seniors Group	£500.00	£500.00
Carrickhill Thursday Senior Citizens Club	£500.00	£500.00
Cliftonville Community Centre	£495.00	£495.00
Dance Starz Dance Group	£500.00	£500.00
Docksiders Senior Mens Group	£500.00	£500.00
Dolphin Womens Group	£500.00	£500.00
Donegall Park Avenue Community Association	£850.00	£500.00
Forever Young Club	£500.00	£500.00
Glenbank Community Association	£500.00	£500.00
Grapevine Seniors Club	£500.00	£500.00
Harbour Lights Senior Womens Group	£500.00	£500.00
Indian Senior Citizens Club	£500.00	£500.00
Jennymount Craft Circle	£500.00	£500.00
Kropka PL	£500.00	£500.00
Ligoniel Family Centre	£500.00	£500.00
Loughside Football Club	£500.00	£500.00
Lower Oldpark Community Association	£500.00	£500.00
Lower Oldpark Friendship Club	£500.00	£500.00
Midland Art Club	£500.00	£500.00
Midland Senior Citizens Club	£500.00	£500.00
North Belfast Cultural Society	£500.00	£500.00
Sacred Heart Pensioners Social Club	£500.00	£500.00
Shared History Interpretive Project (SHIP)	£760.00	£500.00
Shore Crescent Friendship Club	£669.00	£500.00
Silver Threads Club	£500.00	£500.00
St. Kevins Senior Citizens Group	£500.00	£500.00
St. Marys Ladies Group	£1,500.00	£500.00
Trinity New Lodge Senior Citizen Club	£700.00	£500.00
Westland Community Group	£650.00	£500.00
Whitecity C.Development Association	£500.00	£500.00
Woodvale Mens Group	£500.00	£500.00
York Road Civil Defence & Bowling Club	£500.00	£500.00
Sub Total	£25,724.00	£18,995.00

<u>GROUP NAME</u>	<u>REQUESTED</u>	<u>RECOMMENDED</u>
SOUTH		
Annadale & Haywood Residents Association	£500.00	£500.00
Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	£500.00	£500.00
Belfast Holyland Regeneration Association	£500.00	£500.00
Chinese Welfare Association	£500.00	£500.00
Ellis Court Residents Association	£500.00	£500.00
Lower Ormeau & Botanic Environmental Association	£500.00	£500.00
Men Utd	£500.00	£500.00
N.I.Committee for Refugees & Asylum Seekers	£500.00	£500.00
Polish Saturday School in Belfast	£500.00	£500.00
Sandy Row Community Association	£500.00	£500.00
Southcity Resource & Development Centre	£500.00	£500.00
St. John Viannie Senior Citizens Club	£500.00	£500.00
Taughmonagh Community Forum	£480.00	£480.00
Taughmonagh Residents Association	£500.00	£500.00
The Bridge Community Association	£500.00	£500.00
Women's Information Group	£500.00	£500.00
Women's Information Group	£500.00	£500.00
Sub Total	£8,980.00	£8,480.00
WEST		
An Munia Tober (Afterschools)	£480.00	£480.00
An Munia Tober (Arts)	£500.00	£500.00
An Munia Tober (Youth)	£500.00	£500.00
Church of the First Born Senior Citizens Club	£500.00	£500.00
Conway Pensioners Group	£500.00	£500.00
Conway Youth Centre	£500.00	£500.00
Divis Youth Project	£500.00	£500.00
Forthspring Inter Community Group	£325.00	£325.00
Forum For Action on Substance Abuse & Suicide Awareness	£500.00	£500.00
Glencairn Residents Group	£500.00	£500.00
Glencolin Residents Association	£500.00	£500.00
Greater Andersonstown Safer Neighbourhood Project	£500.00	£500.00
Greater Shankill Senior Citizens Forum	£500.00	£500.00
Hannahstown Community Association	£700.00	£500.00
Hannahstown Seniors Group	£500.00	£500.00
Highfield 50+	£500.00	£500.00
Holy Trinity Centre Monday Club	£500.00	£500.00
Immaculata Junior Football Club	£500.00	£500.00
Interface Residents Group	£500.00	£500.00
Link Women's Group	£500.00	£500.00
Link Youth & Young Adult Group	£500.00	£500.00
Lower Andersonstown Mothers Support	£500.00	£500.00
Lower Shankill Community Association	£500.00	£500.00

WEST (continued)		
Middle Andersonstown Festival Committee	£500.00	£500.00
Mountainview Pensioners Association	£500.00	£500.00
Sherbrook Senior Citizens	£500.00	£500.00
St. James Community Forum	£500.00	£500.00
St. Pauls Disability Care Group	£450.00	£450.00
Upper Springfield Dev.Company Action on Disability Project	£500.00	£500.00
West Belfast Senior Citizens Forum	£500.00	£500.00
Sub Total	£14,955.00	£11,775.00
TOTAL	£52,059.00	£41,250.00

RECOMMENDATION FOR GRANT REFUSAL

<u>GROUP NAME</u>	<u>REQUEST</u>	<u>REASON FOR REFUSAL</u>
NORTH		
Men Matter	£500	Application Withdrawn
Newlodge/Duncairn Community Health Partnership	£500	Application Withdrawn
Polish Community Centre Cooltura	£500	No evidence of elected Committee or Board structure
Sailortown Arts and Crafts	£500	Application incomplete and/or relevant information not submitted
Sailortown Cultural & Historical Society	£500	Application incomplete and/or relevant information not submitted
Sailortown Regeneration Group	£1,600	Application incomplete and/or relevant information not submitted
Woodvale Women's Group	£710	Application incomplete and/or relevant information not submitted Group has free use of a Centre directly managed by the Council
Woodvale Yount At Heart Club	£1,000	Application incomplete and/or relevant information not submitted
SOUTH		
St. John Viannie Youth Centre	£500	Formal Youth Organisation
WEST		
Arellian Parents Group	£500	Pre school or nursery provision for under 5s
Cairnlodge Amateur Boxing Club	£500	Sports Club

Arising from discussion in this matter, a Member expressed concern at the small number of applications from groups in East Belfast and he requested that the Department encourage organisations in that area of the City to apply for financial assistance.

In reply, the Director informed the Committee that a considerable amount of work had been undertaken in order to encourage groups in the East of the City to apply. However, very few groups had submitted applications and she pointed out that her Department had noticed a similar response rate from that part of Belfast in connection with other grants which were available.

Holy Family Boxing Club

The Director informed the Committee that the Holy Family and Golden Gloves Amateur Boxing Club had been using facilities at North Queen Street Community Centre since the late 1960s. The Council had managed this Community Centre since the mid 1970s and had formalised a Licence Agreement with the Club in 2004. This was now due for renewal and, prior to a new draft Agreement being prepared, which would enable the Boxing Club to continue its activities at the Centre without granting exclusive possession, it would be necessary for the Committee to agree that a further five year Licence Agreement be entered into and to determine the charge to be levied on the Club for the use of the premises. A report regarding the details of the new Agreement would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Director pointed out that, in recognition of the role which the Club had played in providing services to young people, it had obtained a concessionary reduction which meant that it had previously paid only 10% of the charge which would be due if the Council's Pricing Policy were applied. This represented an amount of £988 in the current financial year and was based on the Club's usage of the building and the actual running costs of the Centre.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to enter into a further five year Licence Agreement with the Holy Family and Golden Gloves Amateur Boxing Club regarding its use of the North Queen Street Community Centre and that the Club be charged an amount of £988 per annum.

Belfast City Council/Department for Social Development Advice Services Funding

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

Belfast City Council is a major funder of Advice & Information Services with a consortium approach to funding and advice delivery having been established in 2005/06.

The current level of BCC Advice grant for 2009/10 is £339,837.96, this is allocated to the consortia as follows:

North Belfast	27.33%	£ 92,877.71
South Belfast	13.51%	£ 45,912.11
East Belfast	16.82%	£ 57,160.74
West Belfast	32.34%	£109,903.59
City Centre	10.00%	£ 33,983.80

In addition, for the last 4 years DSD and BCC have also provided funding to enable the consortia to provide outreach advice services in areas of little or no provision.

The level of funding provided has been

	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/09
DSD Match	£152,725	£152,725	£309,725	£309,725
BCC Match	£0	£152,725	£152,725	£152,725
Total	£152,725	£305,450	£462,450	£462,450

This was allocated to the consortia at the same percentages as the BCC standard grant.

Advice Services in 2008/09 therefore received £329,939.77 (BCC Standard Advice grant) plus £462,450.00 (BCC/DSD Supplementary Advice grant) giving a total of £792,387.77

Key Issues

DSD has now indicated their support for Advice Services for 2009/10 will no longer be split into two funding streams, rather an amount for Advice Services will be offered to BCC with match funding from BCC being required.

The amount available from DSD for 2009/10 is £469,902.00. This will only be accessible once the Council confirms its willingness to match fund to the minimum amount of £355,729.00. This figure includes the amount already allocated to Advice Services.

Resource Implications

Financial

The total spend on Advice Services in 2009/10 is £825,631.00 (see Appendix 1) which is within our revenue estimates

North Belfast :	27.33%
South Belfast :	13.51%
East Belfast :	16.82%
West Belfast:	32.34%
City centre:	10.00%

Recommendations

It is recommended that

1. BCC accept the DSD funding offer and continue to administer the DSD grant resources for Advice Services; and

2. That agreement is given to provide the required match funding contribution of £355,729.00. This is available within the revenue estimates and includes the amount allocated to the present BCC Advice grant £339,837.96.

Decision Tracking

Further to approval and ratification, acceptance of the DSD funding offer and continued administration of the DSD grant resources for Advice Services.

Time line: 17 July 2009
Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart

Key to Abbreviations

DSD – Department for Social Development
BCC – Belfast City Council

APPENDIX 1

<u>Consortiums and Organisation</u>	<u>Total BCC/DSD funding 2009/10</u>
<u>North Consortium</u>	£225,644.95
Citizens Advice Belfast	
Lower North Belfast Com. Council	
<u>South Consortium</u>	£111,542.74
Ballynafeigh Com. Dev. Association	
<u>East Consortium</u>	£138,871.13
Citizens Advice Belfast	
East Belfast Indep. Advice Centre	
<u>West Consortium</u>	£267,009.06
Neighbourhood Dev. Association	
Springfield Charitable Association Ltd	
Falls Community Council	
Corpus Christi	
Greater Turf Lodge Residents Association	
Shankill CAB	
Suffolk & Andersonstown CAB	
<u>Central Consortium</u>	£ 82,563.10
Citizens Advice Belfast	
Belfast Unemployed Res. Centre	
<u>Total</u>	£825,630.98”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Donegall Pass Community Centre

The Committee was reminded that the former Client Services (Community and Leisure Services) Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 12th March, 1998, had agreed to partially fund the construction of a Community Centre in Donegall Pass, together with some associated running costs. At a further meeting of the Sub-Committee in August, 2000, it had been agreed that provision be made within the Revenue Estimates to enable the Centre to operate as a full-time directly-managed facility for a period of two years with a view to building local capacity in order that the local community could eventually manage the facility. This arrangement had been further extended at the Sub-Committee's meeting on 7th January, 2003 and again in 2007 on the basis that both the local community and the Council felt that capacity had not been developed adequately to support local independent management arrangements.

The Director pointed out that the Community Centre represented a significant financial investment by the Council in an area of social need. In addition, the Donegall Pass Community Forum had employed a Regeneration Officer and a development company had been formed to develop a masterplan for the area. She pointed out that the Community Centre was considered to be a vital part of the plan to strengthen the community infrastructure and facilities in the Donegall Pass area. Within this context, Council officials had met with the Community Forum to ascertain the position with regard to the future management arrangements of the Community Centre. The Forum had indicated its intention to develop a full economic business plan in order to enable it to submit a proposal to the Council and had requested financial support to facilitate this process.

Accordingly, she recommended that the Council provide to Donegall Pass Community Forum an amount not to exceed £2,500. She recommended further that the current directly-managed arrangement be extended for one year and that this arrangement be reviewed when the proposal from the Donegall Pass Community Forum was received later in the year.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Economic Development

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of a number of developments including:

- 1. Promoting the local economy and independent retail in South Belfast through the use of open space**
- 2. Belfast Business Awards 2010**
- 3. Business Development Programmes**

Key Issues

1. Promoting the local economy and independent retail in South Belfast through the use of open space

At the September 2008 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. Since this time we have supported business and skills development initiatives and marketing and promotion activities to help many of the independent retailers in the City improve their products and services on offer. A paper detailing our activity over the past 12 months and a suggested action plan for the further development of the independent retail sector during 2009/10 will be presented to Members in due course.

South Belfast Partnership is currently planning to use open spaces and Parks within retail districts to host two events to encourage increased footfall and to market the areas more effectively.

The two events will take place within Council Parks: Crescent Open Space and Drumglass Park.

Botanic Arts Fair

South Belfast Partnership Board organised the first Botanic Arts Festival on Saturday 28th March, 2009 in partnership with the University of Ulster, Ormeau Business Park and Crescent Arts Centre. The Council provided financial support of £12,633 towards the overall cost of organising the event.

The Festival brought together over 50 craft makers and artists from the Art College and provided a platform for them to exhibit and sell their products. In addition, a range of live entertainment and performance was provided and over 1,400 people attended the event during the course of the day.

Given the success of the Festival, the South Belfast Partnership Board is planning a second event on Saturday 12th September 2009. The Partnership has been successful in attracting funding under the Community Festivals Fund to organise a community festival which will allow local artists and designers to showcase their products. They are seeking additional support in order to develop and deliver a PR and marketing campaign to raise awareness of the Festival and to cover the costs relating to the retailing on the day e.g. stall hire.

Drumglass Market

Previous work to support the development of the independent retail sector has identified the importance of the Lisburn Road as a unique location for independent retail in the City and one that requires further investment.

The Traders' Organisation in the area - Lisburn Road Business Association - has been recently formed and is focused on improving the amenity of the area as well as enhancing the retail offering. It has identified the importance of increasing footfall and the need to engage in a targeted marketing and promotions campaign. In order to support this objective, the traders' group has worked with the South Belfast Partnership to develop a one-day event in Drumglass Park. The event will incorporate entertainment for families as well as an art exhibition and market.

It is hoped that, if successful, the market will become a regular event in a programme of animation and promotion across South Belfast's independent retail districts.

Resource Implications

At the May 2009 meeting of Development Committee a budget of £120,000 was approved as part of the Departmental Business Plan to support independent retail in the City. The total cost of hosting the Botanic Arts Fair and the Drumglass Market events is £32,325. South Belfast Partnership have asked for a contribution of £25,000 towards the events.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note the content of this report and approve the allocation of up to £25,000 towards the organisation of two markets to support the independent retail sector (budget already approved by Development Committee in May 2009 as part of Council's contribution to support independent retail in the City).

2. Belfast Business Awards 2010

The Belfast City Centre Management Company (BCCM), in conjunction with the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce (BCTC), has delivered four annual Belfast Business Awards as a means of recognising and celebrating the efforts of businesses in the City. The event was first introduced in 2004 and since this time Council has been a key partner and major sponsor, providing

funding towards sponsorship of individual award categories (2004, 2006, 2007 and 2008) and towards the hire of suitable venues (2007 and 2008 only). Additional sponsors in previous years have included the Department for Social Development, KPMG, Ulster Bank, Victoria Square and Westfield Castlecourt.

The scheme currently culminates with a high profile Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony in November and attracts between 350 – 450 individuals (depending on the venue).

For the first time in 2008 the concept of the Awards was widened out to the 'Belfast Awards', retaining many of the popular business focussed categories but also including new categories aimed at making the Awards relevant to larger parts of the City, as well as reflecting the wide goals of BCCM's funders. Some of the additional awards included 'Best Regeneration Project' and 'Belfast Champion'.

Future of the Awards

The Business Awards is a successful event and represents an excellent opportunity for the Council to engage with the private sector. However, based on our engagement in previous years, there are a number of concerns regarding its current format that we feel should be addressed if it is to be delivered again in the future.

In the first instance it is proposed that the Council takes the lead in hosting any future scheme as existing award categories currently go well beyond BCCM/BCTC's competencies i.e., the awards are not only retail focussed but include categories such as 'Best Business Growth', 'Best New Start Business', 'Creative Industries' and 'Contribution to Education'.

In addition the Awards are not only for businesses inside BCCM's geographical boundaries, but for businesses located across the greater Belfast area.

Finally it is not exclusive to BCCM members – anyone is eligible to apply. For these reasons it is felt the Business Awards should be Council-led, perhaps with Invest NI or at the very least the BCTC. The Council would however welcome the opportunity to work with BCCM and other third party organisations in the delivery of the Awards, contracting out certain elements of its organisation if required e.g., managing ticket sales and corporate sponsorship.

As well as the Council taking the lead in delivery of the Awards it is also proposed that a number of further changes be made to its existing format. These changes include:

Timing of the Awards

With approximately 10 other award ceremonies delivered across Belfast during the months of October, November and December i.e., UTV Business Eye Awards, Go Belfast Awards and The Belfast Telegraph Northern Ireland Property Awards it is recommended that a more appropriate time for holding the event may be earlier in the calendar year. For this reason it is recommended the Awards are delivered in spring 2010 as opposed to November 2009.

Award Categories

It is recommended that the Council reverts to delivering the Belfast Business Awards as opposed to the more general Belfast Awards which were delivered in 2008. In doing so this presents a great opportunity for the Council to streamline existing categories and to introduce a number of additional awards reflecting some of the goals of the Economic Development Unit e.g., Independent Retailer of the Year or Best Film and Best Digital Media Product Award.

It is recommended these new Awards would be open to all businesses across the greater Belfast area.

In the longer term the Council could explore widening the categories further to reflect the work of the organisation as a whole and host the Belfast City Council Awards.

Sponsorship

Consideration should be given to asking sponsors of individual award categories to offer tangible benefits to the winning businesses e.g. X hours of pro bono support.

Media Partner

Media coverage of recent events has been disappointing. In creating additional publicity, a press partner must be sought to help promote and report on the event.

Resource Implications

The cost of hosting the Belfast Business Awards in 2010 will be approximately £90,000. A budget of £20,000 was approved as part of the Departmental Business Plan at the May 2009 meeting of the Development Committee. Other sources of income will include private sector sponsorship and ticket sales.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and agree the proposal for Council to take the lead in delivering the Belfast Business Awards 2010.

Decision Tracking

An update report on progress will be brought to Committee.

Time line: January 2010

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

3. Business Development Programmes

At the Development Committee meeting in May 2009 approval was given to develop a series of business development programmes aimed at helping businesses in Belfast enhance their own competitiveness and growth potential. These programmes include The Franchise Initiative, Sales Growth, Strategy In Business and Business Improvement through Environmental Solutions (BITES).

Individual tenders for the delivery of these initiatives will be issued in the Spring and Summer of 2009. Members are asked to delegate authority to the Director of Development, in association with the Chairman of Development Committee, to approve the most economically advantageous tenders, subject to a form of contract being drawn up by Legal Services.

Resource Implications

The budget was approved by Committee in May 09 and is included in the Departmental Plan.

Recommendations:

Note the contents of the report and approve the proposal to appoint the most economically advantageous tenders for the individual programmes following a competitive tendering process and subject to an appropriate legal contract.

Abbreviations

BCCM	Belfast City Centre Management Company
BCTC	Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce"

The Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the foregoing report.

Strategic Regeneration Frameworks

The Director informed the Members that the five Strategic Regeneration Frameworks for Belfast had been completed and signed-off by the Minister for Social Development. During the summer months, the Development Department would examine the Frameworks and submit a report to the Committee in August or September.

Noted.

Children and Young People – Application to Corporate Thematic Fund

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

At its meeting on 23rd January 2009, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed the revenue estimates for 2009/10. These estimates included £500,000 for the establishment of a corporate strategy budget to finance those elements of cross-cutting work which could not be solely delivered within functional budgets. COMT has already agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee will have overall control of the thematic budget and any proposals or recommendations made to the Committee must come through the Chief Officers' Management Team. Chief Officers were asked to make applications for funding through the budget for consideration by the team at its meeting on 6th April.

Applications were to be assessed in line with the principles agreed by COMT on 9 March, which were:

- It must be clear that funds do not exist in Departmental estimates to carry out the work proposed;
- Bids must include activity which will incur the expenditure of the entire budget applied for within the period 2009/10;
- Bids should clearly state the way in which the funding will help achieve the objectives within the Corporate Plan, with a focus on the difference the activity will make on the ground for people and communities;
- Bids should encourage cross-Council or inter-agency working; and
- They should have an element of innovation.

The Director of Development has submitted an application to further the Council's work for children and young people in the City. An initial assessment has been carried out by COMT and the programme proposal has been agreed in principle.

The Children and Young People proposal seeks funding of £100,000 to give impetus to the formulation of a strategy for Children and Young People and a related year long programme of developmental intervention that builds on professional expertise, better integrates and aligns existing service provision and uses the Council's political influence to shape the delivery of a range of services to children and young people by other public bodies and community based organisations. Utilising the reopening of City Hall as a showcase occasion, a series of events, debates and performances will highlight and promote the contribution of young people to the social and civic fabric of the City. The high profile event will provide a platform both for Council and for young people to convey a clear message of the importance of young people to the future development of the City and of the Council's intent to act as a champion for their rights, responsibilities and achievements.

Potentially, all of the children and young people of the City could benefit from their participation in a wide range of programmes, events and activities organised across Council Departments and through attendance at showcase events such as the reopening of City Hall. Over the longer term, the strategy and related programmes would seek to promote personal development, social, recreational and educational knowledge and skills amongst the population of young people in the City.

Individual programmes will be expected to set and monitor performance indicators tailored to each specific context.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the draft programme to Committee and seek its endorsement and further recommendation to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Key Issues

In the absence of a corporate strategy, we propose to prioritise the following key areas of work in line with the three main categories contained within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the OFMDFM 10 year Children & Young People's Strategy. These are:

Provision

To position Council as a champion for Children and Young People and to use its political influence to shape policy and better integrate service provision in conjunction with other providers in the statutory and community and voluntary sectors;

Protection

The Council is committed to service delivery which promotes good practice and protects children and vulnerable adults from harm.

Participation

To promote citizenship and civic participation by linking young people to governance decision-making structures and processes at neighbourhood, City, national and international levels;

Our proposed programme presents the Council with an opportunity to offer a dynamic and credible City-wide programme which will appeal to young people in general, many of whom may previously have perceived themselves to have minimal contact with BCC.

The programme purpose is:

- To put in place a strategy for Children & Young People in BCC and for Belfast
- To create awareness of the range of services and facilities available to Children & Young People in BCC
- To enhance the participation of young people in BCC and Belfast.

The programme will have 2 main areas of activity:

- Evidence, Advocacy and Strategy
- Activity and Participation.

A draft programme is under development and officers are working with key partners to maximise activity at both a neighbourhood and City level and, where possible, attract levered funds to grow the programme.

The key elements of the programme are:

- To collate and brand current services in order to promote the BCC programme in a way which will allow services to build and extend on current provision and offer new opportunities for collaborative working both internally and with external providers.

- To provide additional activities in neighbourhoods across the City. Through our work with the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, we will identify a range of projects which can be programmed during the summer period and which will complement the existing whole City playscheme.
- To provide additional activities in the City. We will build on and expand our current work with the Urban Trans programme to include a number of events and participative projects including an Ulster Hall event. Events will include a mix of free and low cost activity.
- A number of key events are planned for children and young people at the reopening of the City Hall, including a carnival day, a family fun day, Oh Yeah concert and a youth performance (subject to Council agreement). We will work with the programme organisers to develop linkages to the 'B part of it' summer programme.
- The Youth Forum will be refreshed taking into account the recent review of its practice.
- Importantly, this proposal will develop a platform for a new approach and strategy. As indicated, the reopening of the City Hall marks a key point in the life of the City and an opportune moment for Council to mark a new beginning in our engagement and work with young people and our changing and developing role as a consequence of RPA. We will host a major conference for key stakeholders by March 2010 offering a high profile engagement opportunity for the BCC Children and Young People Strategy.
- The programme will be launched during early July 2009.

The full sum of money would impact both on a broad and a targeted level across the geography of the City and the range of priorities.

Resource Implications

Financial

An application was submitted by the Director of Development to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for £100,000 funding.

Human Resources

The programme will be co-ordinated by the Development Department. In order to maximise the opportunities for collaborative working an internal project steering group has been established.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Notes and endorses the outline Children and Young People Programme;
2. Recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that £100,000 is allocated for the Children & Young People Programme within the Corporate Plan thematic budget;
3. Agree to a programme launch in early July 2009; and
4. Approve officer engagement with key stakeholders to lever in partner funds for the programme.

Decision Tracking

Further to approval and ratification, a report outlining the programme and associated impacts will be presented to the Development Committee.

Time line: April 2010
Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart

Key Abbreviations

BCC	–	Belfast City Council
COMT	–	Chief Officer's Management Team
NRP	–	Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership
OFMDFM	–	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
RPA	–	Review of Public Administration"

In answer to a Member's question, the Director assured the Committee that both Church and uniformed youth groups would not be excluded from the Children and Young Peoples' Programme.

Arising from discussion, it was pointed out that the Council should hold discussions with the Belfast Education and Library Board regarding its youth services provision and that the Council would need to ensure that it did not set a precedent regarding the provision of assistance to children and young people, which was the responsibility for the Department of Education.

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

Awards Received by the Development Department

The Committee was informed that the Arterial Routes Team had recently received a Making a Difference Award. In addition, under the Northern Ireland Tourist Board Awards, the Department's Late Night Art Initiative had been judged to be "the best new product" and the Belfast Welcome Centre had been considered to be "the best Tourist Information Centre". Furthermore, the Cultural Tourism Visitor Management Plan had won the Association of Town Centre Management's National Award in the "Centre Move" Category, which dealt with moving people around the centre of a city.

The Committee requested that its congratulations be conveyed to the staff which had been involved in these projects.

Chairman