

Development Committee

Wednesday, 12th August, 2009

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Humphrey (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Lavery); and
Councillors M. Browne, Campbell, Convery, Ekin,
N. Kelly, Kyle, McCausland, Mhic Giolla Mhín,
Mullaghan, O'Reilly, Rodgers and Rodway.
- In attendance: Ms. M. T. McGivern, Director of Development;
Ms. S. McKay, Head of Economic Initiatives;
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 Cunningham, Kirkpatrick, C. Maskey and P. Maskey.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July.

Staff Bereavement

The Chairman informed the Committee of a bereavement affecting a member of staff within the Development Department. The Committee agreed that a letter of condolence expressing its sympathies be forwarded to the officer concerned.

Post of Director of Development

(Mr. P. McNaney, Chief Executive, and Mrs. J. Minne, Head of Human Resources, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director of Development informed the Committee that she had been appointed recently to the position of Director and Chief Executive of the Belfast Metropolitan College and would be leaving the Council's service on 31st October.

At this point in the meeting, at the request of the Chairman, all officers present, with the exception of the Chief Executive, the Director of Development, the Head of Human Resources and the Committee Administrator, left the room whilst this item was discussed.

The Chief Executive paid tribute to the work which Ms. McGivern had undertaken during her ten years of service with the Council and indicated that there would be a more appropriate occasion when Members and officers could mark the contribution which she had made to the City during her employment. He advised that the nature and level of the post would normally mean that an executive search approach was included in the recruitment arrangements which typically involved researching market conditions, identifying and encouraging suitably experienced applicants, a dedicated website for the role, providing impartial advice on the role, answering applicants' queries, following-up initial candidate interest, handling responses and conducting an initial sifting exercise for presentation to the Council's selection panel. He indicated that the cost of this work would be in the region of £15,000. He pointed out that the responsibilities and functions of the Director of Development, along with other chief officer posts in the Council, may change as a result of the Review of Public Administration and/or organisational change. Consequently, this post should be offered on the basis that the responsibilities and functional areas outlined in the job description may be amended. The Chief Executive indicated that such a clause should be included in each of the Council's Directors' terms of employment which would permit flexibility of responsibility in the run up to the Review of Public Administration.

The Head of Human Resources indicated that the appointment would be made on merit in accordance with the Council's normal recruitment and selection procedures and the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Practice on Recruitment and Selection. The selection panel for the post should comprise the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, one other Elected Member, the Chief Executive, another Director or the Head of Human Resources, a professional assessor and a representative from the Local Government Staff Commission, with the community balance being provided across the Elected Members and gender balance to be provided across the panel.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the post of Director of Development be filled following the method outlined by the Chief Executive and the Head of Human Resources and authorised the employment of an appropriate company to undertake the executive search for the post at an appropriate cost of £15,000.

Planning and Transport Unit - Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information

Update on the Regional Development Strategy/Regional Transportation Strategy Review

The review of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) was announced by the Minister for Regional Development in June 2008. Following the Department of Regional Development (DRD) stakeholder workshops in December, the Council submitted an initial written response which was approved by the Development Committee in February 2009.

The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) for Northern Ireland 2002-2012 was published in July 2002 outlining the strategic transportation investment priorities, potential funding sources and affordability of planned initiatives over the 10 year plan period. The Regional Transportation Strategy supports the RDS by defining the transportation vision for the Province and included a commitment to carry out a review.

Sprucefield Public Inquiry

In August 2008, Sprucefield Centre Ltd submitted a revised application for a significant retail development (including John Lewis Partnership) at Sprucefield. The proposed scheme will comprise a John Lewis Department Store of 22,300 m² (covering four floors), 19 individual retail units with a total area of 22,500 m² (no more than four of the units to be less than 250 m² and the majority more than 500 m²), and 7 food units totalling 1,580 m².

Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce attended the Special Development Committee meeting in February 2009 to express their concerns in relation to the current Sprucefield Centre application for further retail development. The Committee agreed to maintain the previously adopted position and submit an objection to the proposed development, including a recommendation that the proposed development be subject to a public inquiry.

The Council submitted an objection to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) reiterating the previously articulated position that the application would be considered contrary to both the current (RDS) and the proposed planning policies (BMAP) by virtue of the adverse implications for the existing retail centres and the future regeneration of Belfast and other adjoining centres.

The Department of Environment has requested the Planning Appeals Commission to conduct an Article 31 public inquiry for the purpose of considering the implications arising from the Sprucefield Centre Ltd application. The inquiry date has been set for Monday, 30th November 2009 at Park House, Great Victoria Street.

The Belfast Masterplan Review

The Council commissioned a masterplan for Belfast in 2003 to provide a framework for the development of Belfast for the period to 2020. The Belfast Masterplan was published in April 2004 and provided a strategic development framework for Belfast based on consideration of the economic, social and environmental issues in the City.

The adopted Belfast Masterplan provides the Council with a strategic vision for the future regeneration and growth of the City. The Masterplan also provides the basis for Council engagement in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, strategic development sites such as Titanic Quarter and the various regeneration strategies published by the Department for Social Development. The analysis also supported Council regeneration initiatives such as 'Renewing the Routes'.

Transport Policy Review

The Council's revised Transport Policy was considered by the Development Committee in May 2009 and it was agreed that, following ratification of the draft policy, it would be formalised into a public document. During consideration of the Policy findings at the June 2009 Council meeting further clarification was sought on the specific issue of the proposed EWAY proposal for the Comber Greenway and the implications for the proposed Transport Policy.

Key Issues

Regional Development Strategy/Regional Transportation Strategy

The public consultation on the review of the Regional Development Strategy was expected to commence in Spring 2009, this has now been postponed. The Department for Regional Development recently announced that the public consultation will take place in Autumn 2009 and include a series of public workshops across the region. In the interim DRD has invited children and young people to submit a piece of artwork to represent their views on what Northern Ireland will look like by 2035. The Regional Transportation Strategy also included a commitment to carry out a review and the Minister for Regional Development announced in April 2009 that this review will be carried out in Autumn 2009.

Sprucefield Public Inquiry

In advance of the public inquiry, the Council is required to submit a statement of case to the PAC by Friday 18th September 2009. The evidence is to be structured under the following topic headings:

- Economic benefits, severability and alternatives
- Impact on existing retail centres
- Impact on travel patterns, the road network and road safety

- Design, landscaping and visual impact
- Impact on the natural and built environment
- Impact on broadcasting and telecommunications
- Any other issues

The PAC will exchange the statements of case in the following week and the Council will have an opportunity to make comment on the other parties' cases. This rebuttal statement must be submitted to the PAC by Friday, 23rd October 2009.

The inquiry will commence at 10am on Monday, 30th November 2009 and the Council has responded to the PAC confirming that it will submit a statement of case and participate in the public inquiry. The approach to preparation and participation in the public inquiry will be to utilise internal resources supported by Dr Tony Quinn, the retail planning expert previously commissioned by the Council to provide specialist evidence. The legal representation will also be provided through the use of internal Council resources.

Belfast Masterplan

In the period since the formulation of the Masterplan in 2003/04 there has been considerable change to the economic, social and environmental context for the development of Belfast and the wider region. In addition, the proposed Review of Public Administration and the transfer of responsibilities, including local land use planning and regeneration functions, have altered the administrative context.

The five years since adoption have also seen the development of a number of new strategies, including the City Centre Masterplans and the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks, which the Department for Social Development commissioned for each of the five Partnership Board areas. This changing context and the emerging strategies for areas of the City have highlighted the need for the Council to have a coherent and up to date vision for the future development of Belfast.

The review of the current Belfast Masterplan offers the opportunity to revisit the strategic vision for the City. This review and updated strategic position would facilitate continued Council engagement with strategies such as the proposed Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and assist in influencing regeneration/development initiatives planned for the City.

The current Departmental budgets include provision for the procurement of the Masterplan review. To initiate the project it is suggested that the Committee approves an allocation of £70,000 towards the review and associated stakeholder consultation.

Transport Policy Review

The text of the agreed Transport Policy has been condensed to form the basis for a formal Policy document and a copy is available on Modern.gov.

Following the June 2009 Council, a meeting was convened to provide clarification in respect of the implications of the proposed Policy in relation to the issues raised. Committee may wish to note that, whilst the Transport Policy does not specifically address the alignment of the EWAY route, the strategic approach which seeks the 'introduction of a sustainable transport corridor plans' takes account of the need to prioritise access to sustainable modes of travel, such as public transport, walking and cycling, in advance of the provision of new highway capacity.

Members may also wish to note that in May 2008, the Council responded to the publication of the *Rapid Transit Network – Belfast Metropolitan Area – Strategic Business Case* and referred specifically to the issues relating to the Comber Greenway stating that:

'The Council have received representations in relation to the potential conflict between the EWAY proposal and the Comber Greenway. Whilst the walkway and cycleway were introduced as temporary resources along the protected alignment they have become well utilised. The Council would request the development of the route seeks to ensure the minimisation of impacts on the existing environment to integrate the provision or retention of the existing facilities'.

Resource Implications

Financial

The provision of specialist retail planning assistance for the Sprucefield public inquiry has been estimated to cost £8,000. The review of the Belfast Masterplan will exceed the limit on procurement by quotation and will be subject of a competitive tender process with a budget approval of £70,000 recommended. The current Departmental budgets include provisions for both the participation in the Sprucefield Inquiry and the procurement of the Masterplan Review.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

1. Note that public consultation will not take place on the RDS until Autumn 2009 along with public consultation on the review of the RTS;

2. Note the proposed approach to participation in the Sprucefield public inquiry and approve the allocation of up to £8,000 from existing budgets towards the cost of specialist advice;
3. Approve the proposed review of the Belfast Masterplan and the procurement of specialist support through a competitive tender process at a cost of up to £70,000; and
4. Note the Council's position on the Comber Greenway.

Decision Tracking

1. Preparation for Public Inquiry and participation to be reported back to committee.
Timeline: November 2009 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay
2. Results of the proposed procurement process for the Masterplan review to be reported back to committee.
Timeline September 2009 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay
3. Formal Transport Policy document to be published.
Timeline October 2009 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay"

During discussion in the matter, Members made the undernoted comments regarding the proposed review of the Belfast Masterplan referred to within the report:

- (i) it might not be appropriate to undertake the review given that the boundary changes which would come into effect following the Review of Public Administration had not yet been clarified and the economic downturn was continuing;
- (ii) even if it were considered appropriate for the review to proceed it might not be necessary to employ outside consultants given the internal expertise which existed within the Council; and
- (iii) no mention had been made within the review of cycling, which was a significant mode of transport within the City.

In reply, the Director indicated that it might be possible for the review to be undertaken at a cost less than the £70,000 set out in the report. She accepted that there was in-house expertise to undertake such a review but pointed out that it would be necessary to relieve these staff of their current duties in order to permit them to concentrate on such work and, given the existing workload within the Department it was not considered to be a feasible option. She indicated that the Masterplan, which had been first produced in 2004, had helped to shape the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan and had been due for review in 2007. In addition, the Council's own Arterial Routes and Renewing the Routes initiatives, which had been a considerable success, owed much to the original Belfast Masterplan. The Director advised the Committee that the proposed review would allow the Council to put forward its own proposals for the future development of the City and that she would seek to ensure that the review incorporated the cycle routes in the City.

Following further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Rodgers,
Seconded by Councillor Rodway,

That, given the uncertainty about changes to the City's boundary and the continuing economic downturn, no review be undertaken of the Belfast Masterplan at this time.

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

Following further discussion, the Committee:

- (i) noted that the public consultation on the Regional Development Strategy would not take place until the Autumn to enable it to be held at the same time as the public consultation on the review of the Regional Transportation Strategy;
- (ii) noted the proposed approach to the Council's participation in the Sprucefield Public Inquiry and agreed that a sum of £8,000 from existing budgets be allocated towards the costs of employing the specialist advice which would be needed; and
- (iii) noted the Council's position on the Comber Greenway.

Renewing the Routes - Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Background Information

This report provides general updates on progress for the Renewing the Routes Programme and seeks endorsement of proposed actions, including amendments to identified projects, the reallocation of resources and proposals in relation to two art pieces.

The report also provides clarification of the issues raised at the previous Committee, outlines a partnership request from the Belfast Regeneration Office and seeks approval for a review of the current Renewing the Routes activity with a view to securing the capacity of the Council to carry out targeted local regeneration activity following the completion of the current Renewing the Routes Programme that ends in March 2010.

Key Issues

Update on progress made with the Renewing the Routes Programme

Through the Renewing the Routes Programme, the Council continues to develop and lead targeted local regeneration. The Renewing the Routes is a focussed approach to enhancing the vitality of these roads through the implementation of integrated regeneration plans in the Shankill, Falls, Crumlin and Springfield Road areas.

The challenging programme for each of the areas remains on target in terms of project completions and spend profiles. Work across the four broad areas has seen over 190 properties benefit from the Commercial Improvement Programme and with the increasing popularity/participation rates within the Programme it is anticipated that a further 160 properties will be completed by March 2010. This emphasis has made this element of the Programme the focus of the transformation within the target regeneration areas.

Complementary key initiatives include the Glenbank and Ardoyne public realm projects within the Crumlin area, environmental improvements and public pieces within the upper Springfield area, completion of environmental works to the St Peters area of Falls and the completion of works to Woodvale Presbyterian Church and Shankill Rest Garden in the Shankill.

Programme Variations

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

Shankill Road

Committee previously approved the procurement of public art for a site within the Shankill part funded by a £10,000 contribution from the Integrated Development Fund (IDF). Following further consultation and discussions with the funding parties it is considered that the commissioned art piece of a 'Millie' could be more appropriately located on the Crumlin Road. Discussions with the Housing Executive have identified the potential for the temporary location of the 'Millie' at the site on junction of Clifton Park Avenue and Crumlin Road. This temporary installation would be an interim stage prior to the objective of securing a permanent location as part of proposed redevelopments fronting onto the Crumlin Road.

This relocation would necessitate a change in the funding arrangement as the agreed Shankill Road IDF allocation could not be applied to a project on the Crumlin Road. It is therefore proposed that the previously agreed contribution to the art piece is met from within existing Departmental budgets.

The variations proposed are in respect of four previously identified projects at the Peters Hill gateway site amounting to £50,000. The original proposal and allocations were intended to support public realm enhancements including environmental projects in partnership with other agencies. In the absence of the anticipated parallel activity in the area, it is proposed that the fund be utilised to supplement the ongoing commercial improvement scheme. Approval is therefore requested for the reallocation of the resources identified for the Peters Hill gateway project to supplement the Commercial Improvements Programme, including the properties within the immediate Peters Hill area.

Springfield Road

The landscaping project for the area adjacent to the Springfield/Whiterock Road junction is at final design stage and taking account of the physical restrictions of the site includes a provision for a further piece of public art. A portion of the funding from this project will be used to create the new art piece within the open space area adjacent to the pylon. This element of the project would be delivered in partnership with the Council's new Public Arts and Community Co-Ordination Officer.

A two stage process is proposed to secure the development of the terms of reference for prospective artists and oversee the consideration and approval of the submissions from the appointed artist. In accordance with the public art procurement guidelines this will require a Steering Group to be established to oversee the process. The proposed steering group will comprise the Chair and Deputy Chair or nominees, Belfast City Council's Renewing the Routes and Public Arts Officers, DRD Roads Service, NIHE, three nominations from Neighbourhood Renewal and the Upper Springfield Arts Manager. The panel will assess the submissions against an established brief based on the ongoing local engagement, appoint the artist to carry out further consultation (prior to the finalisation of the art piece concept) and assess the final submission based on this consultation and the original brief. The budget allocation for the piece, to include consultation by the appointed artist, will be £30,000 from the overall funding allocation identified for the environmental improvement scheme in the original action plan.

St Peters area – Falls Road

Following the further investigation of the proposal Members may wish to note that the proposed scheme will include commercial improvements (subject to agreement) to the two adjacent units. The proposal will also include differentiated footway resurfacing along the route that connects Falls Road to St Peters Cathedral. The potential for an additional tourism sign for the area will also be considered as part of the overall project for this part of the Falls Road.

Specific Project Proposal Information

Members will note that at the June Committee meeting that the Committee agreed to defer consideration of that portion of the report relating to the Republican Sinn Fein property on the Falls Road to enable further legal advice to be obtained.

The specific project proposal previously brought before the Committee related to a phase of the proposed commercial improvement works that would include the Republican Sinn Féin offices on Falls Road. The offices are located within a block of premises for which a package of cosmetic enhancements works were proposed as part of the ongoing comprehensive approach to the frontage refurbishments in this target area on the Falls Road.

The legal advice sought from the Director of Legal Services has taken account of the clarification provided by Republican Sinn Féin in respect of their interest in the property. Committee may wish to note that the formal documentation provided by the organisation indicates that the property is in the ownership of a private individual with the organisation occupying the property by virtue of an agreement rather than a formal lease.

Following consideration, Legal Services have advised that there is no legal impediment to doing these works as long as no money is expended on signage or other matters that could be construed as for political publicity. The fact that the group doesn't actually own the premises themselves does not affect this advice. If the Council did not carry out the works at the premises, there is a possibility that the group could attempt to challenge the Council's decision by way of Judicial Review. There is a possibility in this case that such a review may be successful.

In light of the advice provided by Legal Services it is suggested that the refurbishment works should be carried out at the property but restricted to the façade improvements and exclude any work to the building signage, as the signage would be considered to relate to political publicity.

Belfast Regeneration Office Request for Partnership Activity

The Belfast Regeneration Office on behalf of the Minister has approached the Council in relation to the potential for a partnership to develop a commercial frontages improvement scheme for the Newtownards Road. The request followed a presentation and representation by the Newtownards Road 2012 group in relation to the potential for the wider redevelopment of inner East Belfast.

The Department, with Committee approval, has previously provided technical support to the Belfast Regeneration Office where there were common objectives, programme overlap and the capacity to accommodate additional activity. These previous partnerships have included the development of environmental projects, public realm works and coordinated action in relation to derelict sites on arterial routes.

As Members are aware the current Renewing the Routes local regeneration activity /resources are focussed on the delivery of the Integrated Development Fund in the West Belfast and Greater Shankill areas. The Newtownards Road area was previously included within the Brighter Belfast funded Arterial Routes Initiative with additional support secured from the Belfast Local Strategy Partnership.

Committee may also wish to note that during the development of the Arterial Routes Initiative, the potential for a commercial refurbishment scheme was considered for the Newtownards Road. However, the prioritisation of regeneration activity carried out in consultation with the Partnership Board and other statutory agencies resulted in a focus on environmental enhancement projects and a partnership project for the development of Dr Pitt Park.

Whilst the Belfast Regeneration Office has suggested a possible partnership it has been confirmed that there are currently no resources available to support such a scheme and the Minister has suggested that such schemes are often Council led. It should also be noted that the Council does not currently have a resource allocation for such activity in East Belfast.

It is suggested that the Committee agrees to the Department exploring the potential for a formal partnership with the Belfast Regeneration Office, based on the work carried out under the Renewing the Routes Initiative, that would seek to clarify potential funding and management responsibilities.

Review and future of Renewing the Routes Programme

The proposal for the review of the current Renewing the Routes activity has been brought before Committee for consideration of the approach to securing the capacity of the Council to carry out targeted local regeneration activity following the completion of the current Renewing the Routes Programme in March 2010.

The Renewing the Routes Team, which is responsible for a range of local regeneration functions, forms part of the Planning & Transport Unit. The Team currently comprises two Renewing the Routes Officers and four Assistants who are responsible to the Planning & Transport Policy Manager.

The local regeneration resources were originally put in place to develop a pilot for focussed local regeneration to target activity across some of the most deprived parts of the City. The capital and revenue resources, at that time, were established on a fixed term basis reflecting the innovative nature of the work and the pilot activity proposed under the Brighter Belfast programme.

The work of the Team has, with Committee approval, continued to evolve in response to challenges identified and funding secured on the basis of the original detail scoping and prioritisation. In response to the pilot objectives the type of activity carried out has been varied encompassing direct implementation, plan development, consultation and partnership development as outlined in main body of this report.

The initial pilot activity and the focussed work delivered through the Integrated Development Fund (IDF) in Shankill and West Belfast has highlighted both the benefits and successes of this local regeneration activity in focussed improvements across different parts of the City. The targeted improvements have helped transform local environments and contributed to the development of positive relationships and capacity building with local communities. This value and impact was recognised in the recent Local Government Chronicle Awards recognition and the ongoing survey feedback from participants and residents.

The projected completion of the IDF works highlights the necessity to consider the ongoing activity and the potential for securing the capacity or resources for the Council to deliver future local regeneration projects. The current programme of IDF expenditure across the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Taskforce area is scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2010.

It is proposed that the review of the Renewing the Routes considers the future capacity for the Council both in terms of the revenue funding for staff resources and the dedicated capital resources available for local regeneration projects. This overall objective for a comprehensive approach will require separate parallel processes which it is proposed are coordinated and brought back to a future Committee.

The Committee is therefore requested to consider the approval of a review process that considers both the staff resources and implementation project funding required to effectively mainstream the capacity to deliver an ongoing programme of local regeneration activity for the Council.

Resource Implications

There are no additional financial implications arising from the proposed reallocation of IDF resources between the different projects.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

1. Note the updates set out within the report;
2. Approve the reallocations of the previously agreed budgets of £50,000 in respect of the Peters Hill gateway site to supplement the Commercial Improvement budget for the Shankill Road;
3. Approve the re-location of the proposed 'Millie' art piece and replacement of the agreed funding by £10,000 from within Departmental budgets;
4. Approve the proposals for the art piece on the Springfield Road and the establishment of a steering group, including the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Committee or their nominees, to oversee to consultation and procurement;
5. Approve the environmental scheme in the St Peters area of the Falls Road;
6. Agree that the refurbishment works to the Republican Sinn Féin premises, Falls Road, be restricted to façade improvements only since work to the building signage would be considered as relating to political publicity;

7. Consider the request from the Belfast Regeneration Office for the Newtownards Road and approve exploratory work to clarify the basis for potential future partnership; and
8. Approve a review process that considers both the staff resources and implementation project funding required to effectively mainstream the capacity to deliver an ongoing programme of local regeneration activity for the Council.

Decision Tracking

Following Committee approval:

Recommendations 2-6

Detailed proposals will be developed for the scheme variations to facilitate final implementation.

Timeframe: March 2010 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay.

Recommendation 7

Discussions will be held with the Belfast Regeneration Office to establish the potential basis for future partnership activity.

Timeframe: October 2010 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay.

Recommendation 8

The recommendations in respect of the proposed review of existing renewing the routes activity to be brought back to Committee for consideration.

Timeframe: October 2010 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay.

Key to Abbreviations

IDF	Integrated Development Fund
BRO	Belfast Regeneration Office"

In response to a Member's question, the Director indicated that the current work being undertaken under the Renewing the Routes Initiative was being funded by the Integrated Development Fund which was only available for projects located in North and West Belfast. However, the original Arterial Routes Programme had allocated money to all of the eleven arterial routes in the City and that an amount of £100,000 had been allocated to each main road. She pointed out that agreement could not be reached with the local communities on how the money should be spent in East Belfast. Eventually it

had been agreed that the expenditure be used improve Dr. Pitt Park and to undertake signage work in and around the Thompson Dock. The Belfast Regeneration Office had approached the Council regarding a potential partnership to develop a commercial frontages improvement scheme on the Newtownards Road. However, she informed the Committee that the Regeneration Office currently had no financial resources to enable this work to be undertaken.

After further discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided by the Director and adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

Department of the Environment Consultation on Planning Reform

The Committee was advised that a consultation document entitled "Reform of the Planning System in Northern Ireland" had been issued by the Department of the Environment. The consultation set out proposals to make the changes required to the planning system in order to give effect to the majority of planning functions returning to Local Government in 2011. The Director advised the Members that the Council would be formulating a full response to the consultation prior to the closing date of 2nd October and that a series of stakeholder events would be held across Northern Ireland, including an event in Belfast on 11th September.

She indicated that the key issues which had been raised in the consultation document included:

- (i) the potential for the planning system to become fragmented as regional planning functions would remain with the Central Government Departments, while local planning transferred to Councils;
- (ii) a new development planning system and a number of other reforms to be determined by the new Councils which would have significant resource and capacity implications;
- (iii) a proposal for a high level scrutiny of the Councils' planning functions through a number of measures; and
- (iv) a proposal for a tiered system of dealing with planning applications so that planning applications would be determined by either Central or Local Government, which could potentially cause confusion.

The Director indicated that the proposals contained within the consultation paper were intended to underpin the transfer of planning functions to local authorities and to the establishment of a framework under which the planning role would be undertaken by the new Councils. She reminded the Members that the Transition Committee had been established to ensure the continuation of service delivery post 2011 and to integrate the transfer of services and new functions into the new Council's operation. Accordingly, she proposed that the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources (Transition) Committee would be the most appropriate vehicle to determine the Council's response to the consultation document on planning reform and that both the Development and Town Planning Committees would be invited to the meeting of the Transition Committee at which the draft response to the consultation would be considered.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to note:

- (i) the proposed arrangements for the formulation of a corporate response to the "Reform of the Planning System in Northern Ireland" consultation paper;
- (ii) that any Party Grouping or Member would be able to provide initial input to the formulation of the draft response by contacting the Council's Review of Public Administration Co-ordinator; and
- (iii) that it was intended to invite Members of the Development and Town Planning Committees to attend the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources (Transition) Committee at which the draft response to the consultation would be considered.

North Foreshore Landfill Gas Electricity Regeneration Project

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 20th April, 2005, it had agreed to enter into a joint venture with an experienced developer in order to exploit the landfill gas at the North Foreshore for the purposes of generating electricity. At its meeting on 16th January, 2008, the Committee had appointed Renewable Power Systems to install, operate and manage the landfill gas electricity regeneration facility.

The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that the construction work had been completed to enable the electricity generated to be sold to Northern Ireland Electricity. The facility was the biggest of its kind in Northern Ireland and would provide four megawatt hours of renewable green electricity, enough to power 5,000 homes.

She recommended that the Lord Mayor invite the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment to a switch-on ceremony at the North Foreshore on a date to be determined in September, to which the Members of the Development Committee would also be invited.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Re-Imaging Communities Implementation – Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"Relevant Background Information"

This report provides an update on the ongoing implementation phase of the "Re-Imaging Communities" initiative funded by the Arts Council Northern Ireland (ACNI) and outlines a proposal for an exhibition and event to bring together the participating groups and capture the work carried out during the Re-Imaging process.

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 the art pieces with associated budget costs.

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

From the identified twelve projects, eleven projects are progressing towards final implementation. The proposed project for the replacement of murals in Inner East was unable to proceed as it has not been possible to secure local agreement for the works developed from the first phase of the overall re-imaging initiative.

The work on the remaining projects is ongoing and it is anticipated that all eleven will be completed by September 2009.

Key Issues

Project Updates

The 'Re-Imaging Communities' initiative supports 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 welcoming local environments for all residents and visitors through direct works and a facilitated engagement process involving local communities and artists.

The individual projects have artists 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 public realm for the communities to enjoy and celebrate their culture in a more inclusive manner. The selection of the artist and the final artwork was carried out through local panels with the participation of the local groups, facilitators and Council officers.

Members may wish to note that as part of this process the scope of one of the projects has changed. The An Droichead proposal, instead of developing a mosaic at the railway bridge on Ormeau Road, will now install a sculptural piece on top of the bridge parapet. The change of direction arose from the detailed consultations and the recognition of the prominence of the location. The modification, which required ACNI approval for the re-allocation of resources between budget headings, can be accommodated within the overall programme and will enable completion of all the projects to schedule. The overall programme budget did not change as no additional funding was required.

All the project details have now been finalised and five of the eleven projects have been successfully completed. A summary of the current status of each project 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.

Following completion of the additional structural survey required by Roads Service an engineer and contractor have been appointed. The structure will be installed in mid-August and the piece will be formally unveiled on Thursday 27th August 2009.

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.

Permission from the landowner had to be sought prior to construction of the artwork. The project will now be completed by the end of August and launched at the start of September 2009.

Conway Wall: Following local workshops with community groups adjacent to Conway Mill and the local Travelling Community, the mural for the wall opposite the Mill buildings has been completed. The finished art piece incorporates images from the communities set alongside 'The Sky' poem by Tom Kerr. It was completed at the end of May and launched by the Lord Mayor and Tom Kerr on Wednesday 10th June 2009.

Donegall Pass: A mural was developed, through consultation with the local community, to replace the existing imagery on the gable wall of Oak Street where it meets Donegall Pass.

The new mural depicts a poppy field, with the Ulster Tower at Thiepval as its centrepiece commemorating the lives of all those servicemen who died in the First World War. The mural was completed in June and launched with a local event on Wednesday 8th July 2009.

Glenbryn: The mural between Alliance Road and Alliance Parade has been replaced with a new mural with imagery that positively celebrates local community culture.

The mural incorporates a local sports theme and reflects the backdrop of the hills. Work was completed in July and the launch is scheduled to take place at 11.00 am on Wednesday 12th August 2009.

Inverary: A sculptural piece will be situated in a public space 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. The scale of the proposed piece required planning permission which was granted at the end of June 2009.

The local community has applied for separate funding from Groundwork Northern Ireland for landscaping the area to enhance the setting for the art piece. It is anticipated that a decision on the application will be announced in August. The community aspiration is for the art piece, which has already been produced by the artist, to be installed at the same time as the landscaping work. Subject to the approval of Groundwork, it is hoped to be completed by the end of September 2009 although works may run into October 2009.

LORAG: The final art piece will be incorporated onto a wall at the bottom of Balfour Avenue which was built as part of a joint initiative between the Council and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as part of the local pilot alley-gating scheme.

The art piece has been fabricated off site and will be installed in mid August 2009. The launch is scheduled to take place at 11.00 a.m. on Wednesday 26th August 2009.

Lower Shankill: Ten murals have been 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 reflect the positive community theme of the 'New Shankill'. The project was completed in early June and received positive local and national media coverage, when launched on Tuesday 16th June 2009.

Muck Hills: The four art panels will be erected on a fence on the Lower Shankill Road. The artwork has been developed in conjunction with different groups using the Hammer Activity Centre and portrays imagery and stories from 'under the mountains'.

It is anticipated that work will be completed by the end of August 2009 with a launch proposed for early September 2009.

Short Strand- The existing peace line at Bryson Street formed the basis for the installation of a three dimensional art work. The local community in Short Strand sought to soften the appearance of the wall and created individual artworks which the artist translated onto tiles to form the work that celebrates Belfast's maritime history and marine life.

The three dimensional tiled work was supplemented by further art pieces funded through Greencare and facilitated by Groundwork. The work was completed in April 2009 and launched on Thursday 7th May 2009.

Village Focus Group: The artist, working with the community, has created sculptural figures to reflect the working class heritage of the Village and celebrate their industrial past. The figures will be set onto the piers of the Tate's Avenue railway bridge with additional sculptures of trains acting as an entrance feature for people coming into the area and linking to the former railway halt. A new welcoming mural has also been designed to replace existing imagery and cover graffiti at the bridge underpass.

Planning permission was granted at the end of July and completion is scheduled for the end of August with a planned launch of mid-September 2009.

Celebration of Completed Projects

Re-imagining Communities Projects have provided positive learning and development experience for the participating communities and has exceeded targets in terms of media coverage, participants and community engagement with positive feedback from within the projects and externally. It would be valuable for this work to be encapsulated and celebrated through a publication to chart the different stages of projects from initial workshops, through to implementation of artworks and unveiling.

An exhibition of completed projects could also enable the public and visitors to the City to view the new artworks/imagery and learn about the positive changes currently taking place in Belfast. The exhibition event and programme documentation could bring together the participants from the local communities with the artists and facilitators to share their experiences and celebrate the achievement of the completed projects. It is hoped that an exhibition/event could take place in late September 2009 to coincide with the completion of the projects.

Whilst resources have been identified from within existing budgets to meet the cost of the proposed publication, funding has not yet been identified for the suggested exhibition/event. Discussions with ACNI are ongoing in respect of the potential for a contribution to such an event and Committee approval is sought for the officers to pursue further funding opportunities to support the event which would cost approximately £2,500.

Resource Implications

Financial

Funding of £2,500 will be sought for the development of an exhibition/event to mark the completion of the current Re-imaging initiative and celebrate the work carried out by the participants from across the City.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agrees:

1. to note the updates in respect of the individual projects, as set out within the body of the report; and
2. to approve the organisation and delivery of the exhibition/event to celebrate the completed work, subject to the funding being obtained.

Abbreviations

ACNI Arts Council Northern Ireland

Decision Tracking

Following approval by the Committee the Project Manager will explore funding opportunities to support the organisation of an exhibition/event and report back to the next Committee.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the foregoing report.

Christmas Lights Switch-on 2009

The Head of Civic Events and Venues reminded the Members that the Christmas Lights Switch-on event was attended each year by thousands of people and involved a range of high profile national and local celebrities and, in recent years, the event had been staged at 7.30 p.m. on the third Tuesday in November. However, due to the work which was being undertaken to the pavements and roads in the City centre under the Streets Ahead Programme and the fact that such work in the area of the City Hall was due to be completed not later than 22nd November, he recommended that the Switch-on event be held this year on the fourth Tuesday in November.

He pointed out that, for many years, Councillors, staff and guests had been able to access the event via a “guest area” located adjacent to the stage. However, because health and safety concerns had been raised about the staging projecting into a traffic lane in Donegall Square North, it had become necessary to move the “guest area” to the Robinson and Cleaver side of Donegall Square North. Due to this relocation, he recommended also that only the Lord Mayor go onto the stage to assist with the actual switching-on of the lights. In addition, the Head of City Events and Venues proposed, give the current economic situation and budgetary constraints within the Council, that the normal post-event function in the City Hall be not held this year but be replaced with a smaller function for guests prior to the switch-on.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that for this year only:

- (i) the Christmas Lights Switch-on event be held on Tuesday, 24th November;
- (ii) the “guest area” be located on the Robinson and Cleaver side of Donegall Square North;
- (iii) only the Lord Mayor be on stage to assist with the actual switch-on; and
- (iv) the usual post-event function be replaced by a smaller event for guests prior to the switch-on.

Lagan Canal Restoration Trust

The Head of Economic Initiatives reminded the Committee that its Chairman and Deputy Chairman represented the Council on the Shadow Board of the Lagan Canal Restoration Trust. The main aims of the Trust included the restoration and revitalisation of the waterway from Belfast to Lough Neagh, the development of the area as a major recreational and tourism asset for Northern Ireland and the economic regeneration of the communities along its route. The key benefit to the Council of being a member of the Trust was the ability to influence and shape the future strategic vision of the restored Lagan Canal.

A major advantage of the Trust was that it could bid for funding which might not be available to the local authorities and organisations which were represented on it. She reported that the Councils which contributed to the costs of funding the Trust had been requested to make financial commitments to it for the current and following financial years based on the number of locks in each authority's area, plus contributions from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. The funding which each organisation was being asked to provide, together with the amount which it had provided in the previous financial year, was as set out hereunder:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>2008/2009</u>	<u>2009/2010</u>	<u>2010/2011</u>	<u>Total</u>
Lisburn City Council	£36,451.20	£40,096.00	£31,144.80	£112,400.00
Belfast City Council	£14,500.00	£18,995.00	£14,967.00	£50,580.60
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure Northern Ireland Environment Agency	£18,225.60	£20,048.00	£15,573.00	£56,200.60
Craigavon Borough Council	£9,112.80	£10,024.00	£7,786.20	£28,100.00
Castlereagh Borough Council	£7,290.24	£8,019.20	£6,228.96	£22,480.00
	£3,645.12	£4,009.60	£3,114.48	£11,240.00

After discussion, the Committee agreed to provide the sums of £18,995 in the current financial year and £14,967 in the 2010/2011 year, subject to the Revenue Estimates for that year being approved.

Retail Sector Support Plan 2009/2010

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

The purpose of this paper is to provide Members with an overview of current Council support for the development of Belfast's independent retail sector and to propose an action plan for the further development of this sector during 2009/10.

Members may be aware from previous meetings of the Development Committee that Belfast City Council is currently proactive in supporting a wide range of initiatives to assist in the development and promotion of the independent retail sector across the City. While there are a number of interventions underway at present, up to date research along with specific recent demands from trader groupings have identified additional potential interventions which would support the further development of the sector.

Members are asked to note that a budget of £120,000 was approved at the May 2009 meeting of Development Committee as part of the Departmental Business Plan to support independent retail in the City.

Key Achievements/Outputs to Date

A thriving independent retail sector is important for the vitality and variety of our City, and the Council has been instrumental in developing and delivering a number of initiatives to ensure the sector continues to flourish and that Belfast develops into a vibrant and attractive place for residents, workers and visitors.

Research

In 2008 Council commissioned research to establish area-specific data regarding the size, sector and geographical locations of independent retail within Belfast. This research also considered the underpinning strengths and weaknesses of the sector and has since allowed the Council to identify a range of targeted interventions that will help fill gaps in provision that have been identified by independent retailers and key stakeholders across the City.

Retail Therapy Programme

The Council has been proactive in developing the independent retail product in the City and created a bespoke Retail Therapy Programme - a tailored business development initiative which targeted over 60 owners and managers of independent retail outlets throughout Belfast. Each retailer undertook a business needs audit to identify the key issues facing them in their business, and this was followed by the creation of individual improvement plans. The businesses which took part were eligible for small grants from the Council to help with the implementation of their improvement plans, therefore providing long term benefits to each participant. The participants on Retail Therapy greatly valued the Programme and provided feedback regarding areas of future support. Requests were made for supplementary one-to-one mentoring and long term consultancy support, additional training and masterclasses, support for trader groupings, cooperative marketing activities for independent retailers and grants for improved signage. These requests for additional support have been considered in the Retail Sector Support Plan.

Hospitality and Retail Training for Employment (HARTE)

The Council designed and developed a bespoke Hospitality and Retail Training for Employment programme in January 2009. This programme will create 200 jobs for the long term unemployed in Belfast in the hospitality and retail industries over a period of three years. The Council formulated HARTE and took a lead role in securing funding from the Northern Ireland European Social Fund programme for the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2011. The value of this project is £495,000. The first year of HARTE has been very successful, with 43 students graduating in May 2009 with an average of four accredited qualifications each. 20 delegates have secured employment to date and interviews are ongoing. The second year is well underway and a target of 90 participants is expected to be exceeded by the end of the calendar year.

Retail Masterclasses

The Council took the initiative of designing and delivering a series of retail masterclasses for independent shops. To kick-start the programme Geoff Burch, presenter of BBC2's hit show 'All Over The Shop', delivered a Retail Masterclass on behalf of the Council at Belfast Waterfront Hall on 22 January where he gave local retailers advice on making the most of their businesses to weather the current economic climate and provided tips on improving customer service, motivating staff, identifying and maximising marketing opportunities and improving sales. At this event Belfast City Council launched a series of six additional retail masterclass workshops – open to all independent retailers across Belfast and offered free of charge. These classes were delivered during February and March and were attended by approximately 120 independent retailers across the City. Feedback from these sessions has been extremely positive and many whom attended have indicated an eagerness to attend similar Council led events in the future.

Evening Economy Initiative

The development of the Council's Evening Economy initiative has allowed participants to reap the benefits of the extra footfall in the City centre. We now publish an Evening Economy e-zine which has replaced the More Time Publication and is distributed twice a month through the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB). This e-zine contains information on events taking place in the evenings and special offers for shops/restaurants. The e-zine is distributed to 1,300 businesses that distribute it to their staff, increasing readership to approximately 50,000. An evaluation of the e-zine will be conducted in early Autumn which will help shape the development of a fully comprehensive e-communications strategy.

Belfast Shopping Guide

The production of a new 'Belfast Shopping Guide' in partnership with BVCB has also helped to promote speciality, luxury and niche retail brands in a very targeted and effective way.

Belfast Shopping Festival

The Council delivered the very first Belfast Shopping Festival throughout the month of April 2009 in four locations in Belfast – Bloomfield Avenue and Belmont Road, Belfast City Centre, Lisburn Road and Ormeau Road and the Falls and Shankill Roads. This was a major initiative to support the retail sector, and a platform to promote their business and attract new customers. The Festival in each area encompassed a mix of events, competitions, promotions, street entertainment and in-store activities. This multi-award winning Council initiative provided free marketing for companies taking part through press and outdoor advertising campaigns. As part of the Belfast Shopping Festival Smithfield Market played host to an Urban Edge Fashion Show which utilised all products available from Smithfield traders.

New Market Opportunities

Opportunities have also been given to independent traders to showcase and sell their products and services in open spaces and Council-managed Parks and in other prime outlets e.g., the Christmas Continental Market, Crescent Open Space and more recently, Victoria Square. Council took the lead in establishing a Sunday craft market in Victoria Square to support small craft producers access a new market opportunity by making them visible in an area of high footfall.

Both Smithfield and St George's Markets are operating at full capacity and opportunities are also being explored for further licensed market sites/street trading pitches in the Cathedral Quarter. Marketing plans for traders have been established at St George's and Smithfield which have led to new activities including an alternative fashion show at Smithfield and now frequent demonstrations and entertainment at St. George's.

Renewing the Routes

As part of Belfast City Council's ongoing Renewing The Routes Programme, over 100 small businesses across the City have bright new signage, lighting and frontages. Three phases of shopfront renewals have been completed on the Falls Road, as well as two schemes on the Shankill Road. A further project on the

Springfield Road was completed in April, at the same time as one on the lower Crumlin Road, and a similar scheme has just begun at the shops at Ardoyne. By upgrading shop frontages, Council is prompting developers to realise the potential of commercial premises that exist throughout the City.

Full Summary

These are just a few examples of the ongoing work that Council has taken a lead role in to make Belfast a healthy economic city for independent and speciality retailers. A full summary of all current Council support for the development of the independent retail sector is contained in Appendix 1 (which is available on Modern.gov).

New Retail Sector Support Plan 2009/10

The current economic recession presents real challenges for our independents and Council is keen to ensure that traders in the City receive the support required to help them through these difficult times. Having considered the key findings from recent research and feedback from participants on Council-led initiatives, a draft action plan for 2009/10 has been prepared for Members' consideration and is contained in Appendix 2 (which is available on Modern.gov). This report indicates the significant support mechanisms already in place for the sector within the Development Department and across the wider Council services.

Proposed actions have been identified within the following themes:

1. Capacity building and skills development
2. Marketing, promotion and branding
3. New product development support
4. Physical environment

Activities proposed under each of these themes along with estimated budgetary implications are listed below.

Theme	Activity	Budget
Capacity building and skills development	Retail Therapy Programme	£50,000
	Hospitality and Retail Training for Employment Programme (HARTE)	*
	Retail Survival Surgeries	*
	Local Sourcing Initiative	Investigate possible sources of funding

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Marketing, promotion and branding	Collaborative Marketing Campaigns for Trader Groups	£30,000
	Online Retailing Support	£5,000
	Independent Retailer of the Year Award	*
	Conference for NI Retailers	*
	Promotion and Profiling of Champions in the sector	No costs associated with this activity
	Evening Economy Initiative	Investigate possible sources of funding
	Support for Independent Fashion Design	Resource commitment unknown
New product development support	Opportunities for Independent Retailers through Parks and Open Spaces	£25,000 (already approved by Council)
	Thimble Group	*
	Craft on the Concourse	*
	Market Sites/Street Trading	*
Physical environment	Animation of Core Trading Hub	£10,000
	Graffiti Prevention and Removal	*
	Dressing of Vacant Units	*
	Shop Frontage Improvements	*
	Transport and Car Parking Issues	*
	Festive Lighting	Resource commitment unknown
	Total	£120,000

* Resources already committed from other sources or no additional resources required.

The aims of such activities and improvements will only be achieved through co-ordinated activity between Council, local partnerships, public bodies and private interests. Partnership and collaborative working therefore lie at the heart of our Retail Sector Support Plan.

Progress reports will be presented to Members in due course.

Resource Implications

A budget of £120,000 was approved as part of the Departmental Business Plan at the May 2009 meeting of the Development Committee.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and to approve the proposed Action Plan for 2009/10.

Decision Tracking

No decision tracking applicable as report is for notation only.

Key to Abbreviations

BVCB	Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
BCCM	Belfast City Centre Management
HARTE	Hospitality and Retailing Training for Employment”

In answer to a Member's questions, the Head of Economic Initiatives indicated that Belfast City Centre Management had not been referred to in the report since the Support Plan operated throughout the City, rather than in the City centre only and the Belfast Metropolitan College delivered the Hospitality and Retail Training for Employment Programme through the courses which it operated.

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

Markets Unit - Update

St. George's Market Food Festival

The Head of Economic Initiatives reminded the Members that, in September, 2008, St. George's Market had hosted a series of events as part of the Belfast Food Festival .

She pointed out that, although the Belfast Festival was not being held this year, the Department in conjunction with the traders intended to hold a Food Festival at the Market during September. This would feature local chefs and produce sold at St. George's. The cost of organising the event, which would promote the venue as Northern Ireland's premier food market, would be met from within the Department's Revenue Estimates.

Noted.

Smithfield Market Lettings

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd September, 1999, it had granted authority for the Director, in consultation with the Chairman, to approve the terms of future lettings at Smithfield Market, subject to those terms being reported retrospectively to the Committee. The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that Unit 1 had been let to Mariusz Olzowski, Flat 6, 6 Cromwell Road, Belfast and Sabina Lukomska, 6 Cherryville Street, Belfast, at a cost of £200 per month, for the purposes of operating a nail bar and the sale of health products and that Unit 7 had been let to Enrique Benasa, 63 Dunlambert Drive, Belfast, at a cost of £536 per month for the purposes of selling groceries.

Noted.

Ulster Hall Capital Works Programme

The Committee deferred consideration of a report regarding the capital works programme which had been undertaken recently at the Ulster Hall to enable a site visit to be held.

Mosconi Cup 2010

(Mr. G. Copeland, Events Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Head of City Events and Venues informed the Committee that the promoters of the Mosconi Cup were seeking bids to host the event in 2010. The Cup was an annual nine-ball pool tournament contested between two teams representing Europe and America. It had previously been held in such cities as London, Rotterdam and Las Vegas. He reported that it had been estimated that approximately £100,000 would be required to host the event. However, in the region of £40,000 of this would be "in kind" expenditure. Benefits of the event being held in Belfast would be world-wide television coverage, Council branding at press conferences, venue locations and on the players' kit and positive coverage in a multitude of publications and websites across the world.

He indicated that it was intended that the event would be held in the Ulster Hall and that the City Events Unit had the necessary funding within its budget to meet the costs of holding the Mosconi Cup in 2010, a proportion of which would have been previously allocated to the Northern Ireland Snooker Trophy which would not be held in 2010 due to the unavailability of a suitable venue for the dates required. He pointed out that other sources of funding would be sought in order to reduce the amount which the Council would be required to provide.

During discussion in the matter, several Members expressed the view that the expenditure which would be involved in bringing the Mosconi Cup to Belfast did not represent good value for money and requested information regarding the costs which had been incurred by the Council in holding the Northern Ireland Snooker Trophy in recent years.

In response, the Events Manager indicated that the Cup was a highly-prized competition and that other cities were intending to submit bids to host the event in 2010. He pointed out that the organisers handled the technical issues involved in organising the Cup and obtained income from selling the television rights. He indicated also that it had been estimated that the Cup would attract 2,000 visitors to Belfast. However, as the game of pool attracted a worldwide audience, whereas snooker did not, it was anticipated that the event would receive considerably more television coverage across the world as it was being covered by Sky TV, compared to the Northern Ireland Snooker Trophy which had been broadcast by Eurosport across Europe only. He informed the Members that the Council had contributed £60,000 towards the costs of hosting the Northern Ireland Snooker Trophy in Belfast and that the Council would pursue funding opportunities, both commercial and within the public sector, in an effort to reduce the £100,000 which would be required to bring the Mosconi Cup to Belfast. He reminded the Members that approximately £40,000 of that amount would be "expenditure in kind" and would not result in direct costs to the Council.

Following a lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed that the Council officers submit a bid for the Mosconi Cup competition to be held in Belfast in 2010 and authorised them to undertake further negotiations with the promoters of the event to ensure that it was held in Belfast during 2010 on the most advantageous basis possible.

Support for Sport Event Funding

The Committee considered the following requests for assistance which had been received under the Support for Sport Scheme in relation to events and promotions:

<u>Organisation/Event</u>	<u>Summary of Event and Amount Requested</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Belfast 2009 International Wheelchair Tennis Tournament	Funding in the sum of £4,538 in relation to the holding in September of the twelfth annual tournament, held at the Indoor Tennis Arena	Offer support of £3,630
Cross community five kilometre fun run	Funding in the sum of £1,527.50 in relation to the holding in September of a fun run whose route will cover both the Shankill and Falls areas with the aim of bringing together both sides of the West Belfast community	Offer support of £1,069.25

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Eurocities Annual General Meeting

Following a lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report regarding the Council's participation in the Eurocities Annual General Meeting to enable additional information to be obtained regarding the costs of the event.

**Grosvenor Community Recreation Centre:
Synthetic Pitch – Facility Management Agreement**

(Mr. S. Caldwell, Community Services Area Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Director informed the Members that the former Community and Leisure Services Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 3rd August, 2004, had agreed to enter into a Facility Management Agreement with Roden Street Community Development Group in respect of the provision of a new synthetic pitch at Grosvenor Recreation Centre, subject to the necessary funding being obtained. Subsequently, the Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 11th January, 2005, had agreed to accept an amount of £636,614 from the Big Lottery New Opportunities Fund for Physical Education and Sport towards the cost of providing the pitch. However, the construction of the facility had been delayed at the request of the Department for Regional Development which required the site on a temporary basis to assist with the scheme to widen and improve the Westlink.

She reported that the synthetic pitch at Grosvenor Recreation Centre had recently been completed and, accordingly, the Facility Management Agreement, as agreed by the former Community and Leisure Services Sub-Committee, would be initiated. She pointed out that a copy of the Agreement had previously been circulated to the Committee and that under its terms:

- the Council would own the pitch;
- the Roden Street Community Development Group would be responsible for the management of the pitch in accordance with the provisions contained within the Agreement;
- the Agreement would be in effect for a period of five years and could be renewed for a further period of five years if the Group did not breach the terms of the Agreement; and
- the Council would pay the Group a Management Fee of £44,000 per annum.

In response to Members' questions, the Community Services Area Manager indicated that bookings for the facility would be handled by the Roden Street Community Development Group and that the Group would lodge the fees into the Council's District Fund Account. It was anticipated that, when the pitch was operating at full capacity, it should be generating in the region of £60,000 per annum in booking fees, which would mean that the income would be greater than the Management Fee which the Council was paying the Group to operate the facility. He pointed out that the lifespan of such pitches was in the region of twelve years and that they required little maintenance.

Noted.

Suffolk Community Centre – Outdoor Play Area

(Mr. S. Caldwell, Community Services Area Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was informed that Suffolk Community Centre was a directly-managed facility which was the hub of community activity in the Suffolk area. The Community Centre Committee had been seeking to improve the services which it provided and had been exploring the possibility of developing a vacant site to the rear of the Centre which was within the facility's property and was owned by the Council. The Director indicated that the Centre Committee had been awarded funding of £48,897.50 from Groundwork Northern Ireland to meet the capital costs of providing an interactive outdoor play facility on the site. As the area would be accessed through the Centre, it would be supervised at all times.

She pointed out that, upon completion, the Community Services Section would be responsible for managing and maintaining the play facility, although the Council's Parks and Leisure Department would actually undertake the maintenance of the site, at a cost of £4,000 per annum, not including the replacement of damaged equipment. The Parks and Leisure Department would also provide technical advice when the plans for the facility had been prepared. She pointed out further that, since the proposal had asset implications, it would need to be considered by the Asset Management Group and required the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

During discussion in the matter, a Member pointed out that the Council would be responsible for meeting the costs of maintaining and insuring the facility and enquired as to whether Groundwork had contacted the Council before it had awarded funding to the community group.

In reply, the Community Services Area Manager indicated that Groundwork had consulted the Suffolk Community Centre Committee and the Parks and Leisure Department. He reminded the Committee that, since access to the play facility would be through the Community Centre, it would only be opened when the Centre was open and it was anticipated that vandalism to the facility would be able to be kept to a minimum.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed:

- (i) that the Suffolk Community Centre Committee be entitled to construct an interactive play area on a site to the rear of the Centre, subject to all the statutory approvals being obtained and the Council being kept informed of the progress of the development; and
- (ii) to commend the proposal for approval to the Asset Management Group and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Lions Club International Conference

The Director informed the Committee that Lions Club International was considering bringing its International Conference to Belfast in April 2011 and had requested financial support from the Council to off-set some of the costs associated with holding the event in the City. It would be the first time that the organisation had considered bringing its Conference to Belfast and was planning to host the event in Belfast every four or five years. It had been estimated that the economic benefit of the Lions Club International Conference to Belfast would be £1.3 million and that delegates were expected from North America, Europe, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Accordingly, she recommended that, under the terms of the Council's Subvention Policy, £20,000 be allocated to assist with the costs of the organisation of the Conference.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau – Change of Membership

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 16th January, 2008, it had appointed a number of Members, including Councillor Paul Maskey, to the Board of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau.

The Director informed the Committee that the Sinn Fein Party Grouping had indicated that it wished to appoint Councillor Hartley in place of Councillor Paul Maskey on the Bureau's Board.

The Committee agreed to the change in membership on the Board of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau.

Review Consultation Process for Development Department

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

On 13 June 2007 the Development Committee considered and gave approval for the change management process for the Development Department, which included support from Business Improvement for Departmental restructuring activities. This followed the Council's approval on 1 November 2006 for interim restructuring across the Council ahead of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) and the associated organisational impact of the transfer of functions on the Development Department. Structural Reviews were approved in areas of particular need, which included Business Support, Policy and Research, Events, the Waterfront Hall/Ulster Hall merger and Community Services. The aim of restructuring was to rationalise and release further resources into the process.

On 7 October 2008 the Development Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations of the structural reviews as the management side position in order to proceed under the Council's agreed policies and processes to move to implementation.

The following report is an update following consultation.

Key Issues

Policy and Research, Culture and Arts and Events Reviews

Prior to the original Committee these reviews had been agreed in principle with relevant parties and have now been successfully implemented. The Policy & Research Unit structure was re-designed and streamlined by bringing together what had been two separate Units.

The City Events Unit was re-positioned within the Waterfront and Ulster Hall structure, with the Manager reporting directly to the Head of City Events and Venues. Locating the Unit here allows for the utilisation of the expertise of both sets of staff in organising and co-ordinating events forging close links with the Civic, Sports and Entertainments programmes in the City.

The Culture and Arts Section merged with the Tourism Unit in order to maximise synergies and fully integrate the Tourism, Culture and Arts activities for the City. To support this ethos the roles and responsibilities of the managerial posts were reconfigured.

Markets Review

A trade union and staff representative group had been established to inform and create the proposed working patterns. This group was pivotal in the creation of realistic and effective working patterns. The working patterns are now agreed and signed off.

Business Support Review

With effect from 1 May 2009 all consultations with staff and trade unions have been completed and resulted in the adoption of the management side position put forward to Committee in October 2008. The structure, as adopted at October Committee, was fully agreed with no structural change. There were no additional financial implications following consultation. The implementation of the new structure is now underway in terms of operational implementation and staff implementation through categorisation and agreed council procedures.

Waterfront/Ulster Hall Review

At their meeting of 13 March 2009, the Waterfront Hall Management/Trade Union Forum adopted the revised management side position. This new position allows for a minor change to the structure presented to Committee in October 2008,

This refers to a change in the reporting line for the fixed term post of Education Worker. This post will now report directly to the Arts and Community Co-ordinator rather than the Media, Communications and Customer Relations Manager.

There is no financial implication for this change.

Appendix 1 shows the proposed management side revised structure.

Community Services

Currently involved in the consultation process and the outcome will be brought back to Committee on completion.

Resource Implications

Financial

None

Human Resources

Standard Council procedures will apply in relation to the implementation and categorisation process.

Asset and Other Implications

None

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

1. Note the contents of the report.
2. Agree the adoption of the revised organisation structure for the Waterfront and Ulster Hall.

Decision Tracking

On adoption of recommendation 2, implement the revised structure for the Waterfront and Ulster Hall.

Timeline: October 2009 Reporting Officer: Marie-Thérèse McGivern

Key to Abbreviations

BIS Business Improvement Section

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 Proposed management side revised structure”

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**Development Committee,
Wednesday, 12th August, 2009**

**Appendix 1 – Proposed Management Side Structure can be viewed by opening
Item No. 20 within the Agenda pack.**

The Committee adopted the foregoing recommendations.

Forthcoming Work Plans

The Chairman informed the Committee that, given that the Director would be leaving the Council's service by the end of October and that it was unlikely that her replacement would be in place prior to that date, he believed it would be beneficial for the Committee to meet with senior officers to discuss the Department's work plans for the coming six months.

The Director indicated that she would contact the Members in the near future to arrange such a meeting.

Noted.

Chairman