

Development Committee

Wednesday, 14th April, 2010

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Humphrey (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Lavery); and
Councillors M. Browne, Campbell, Convery, N. Kelly,
A. Maskey, C. Maskey, McCausland, Mullaghan, O'Reilly,
Rodgers, Rodway and Stoker.
- In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;
Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives;
Mr. T. Husbands, Head of City Events and Venues; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Committee Administrator.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Ekin, Kirkpatrick, Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhín and Mhic Giolla Mhín.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 9th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st April, subject to the omission of the minute under the heading "Belfast Welcome Centre" which, at the request of Councillor N. Kelly, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

Deferral of Agenda Items

Due to the lengthy agenda, the Committee agreed to defer until its next monthly meeting consideration of the following items:

- Presentation from representatives of British Telecom;
- Departmental Plan 2010-2011;
- Community Revenue Grants – Options Paper; and
- Shaftesbury Community and Recreation Centre.

Belfast Welcome Centre

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 9th March under the heading "Belfast Welcome Centre", a copy of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

“Belfast Welcome Centre

(Mrs. P. Davison, Estates Surveyor, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

‘Relevant Background Information

The Belfast Visitor and Connection Bureau occupies premises currently leased to Belfast City Council in Donegall Place. BVCB has been approached by Failte Ireland to consider moving their operation into the Belfast Welcome Centre premises in Donegall Place. Failte Ireland requested a meeting with BVCB on 14 January to discuss the possibility of a shared working space.

Failte Ireland has operated a walk in enquiry office in Belfast for over 42 years. They closed their premises in Castle Street just after Christmas 2009 as their lease was due to terminate and the building was unfit for purpose and presented significant health and safety issues for staff continuing to work there.

The service Failte Ireland currently operates is purely information provision and accommodation booking for the Republic of Ireland. After 42 years with a base in Belfast they have a loyal local customer base of regular customers who call in to pick up information and book short breaks, with an annual footfall of just over 20,000 visitors. This service is provided Monday – Friday during core office hours by three members of staff, sharing two full time posts.

BVCB have identified a space that could accommodate Failte Ireland. This space was used as an extra card sales point, however a new main counter was installed last year and extra tills and credit card machines behind the new counter mean the space is now redundant.

Key Issues

BVCB point out that the concept of shared space in Tourist Information Centres and visitor attractions is not new. Failte Ireland has shared office space in the Derry/Londonderry T.I.C. since it opened and more recently NITB have moved into Dublin Tourism Offices.

BVCB have identified the benefits to this shared space approach:

Financial Benefit:

BVCB has proposed a licence fee of £25,000 per annum plus vat. The only additional payments by Failte Ireland would be for separate phone and broadband lines.

In the current economic climate, additional income to BVCB is welcomed when funding is decreasing and generating commercial income is more challenging.

Customer Focused:

The shared space further promotes the “one stop” approach – Belfast Welcome Centre regularly gets enquiries from customers requesting information on the Republic of Ireland and BWC refer them to the Castle Street premises.

New customer base:

In facilitating Failte Ireland customers in the BWC, the BWC can avail of a new market. The current price differential between the euro and the pound means Belfast will benefit with the local customer base attracted by deals in Northern Ireland as opposed to the Republic of Ireland.

The request for shared space was discussed at the BVCB Board. While there was general support for the proposal, there was concern from Board members that a Failte Ireland section within the BWC could dissuade visitors from visiting areas in and around Belfast, drawing their attention to the South of Ireland instead.

BCC’s lease on the Donegall Place premises terminates on 31 July 2010. The landlord has offered a ten year lease on the existing terms and no decision by BCC has been taken on the renewal of the lease due to the ongoing consideration of alternative options.

BCC’s current lease does permit the possibility of granting of a licence to Failte Ireland to enable them to occupy the premises alongside BVCB. The licence would end either upon expiration of the term of BCC’s lease on 31 July 2010, or sooner. If BCC were to renew their existing lease, Failte Ireland’s occupation may be continued subject to terms of BCC’s lease.

The BVCB Board recommended that, subject to BCC approval, a nine month licence agreement be granted to Failte Ireland. During this period BVCB could monitor the situation to ensure there were no adverse impacts from the shared space to Belfast and the wider region.

Resource Implications

Financial:

BVCB receives a pro-rata contribution of £25,000 p.a. from Failte Ireland towards their operating costs.

Physical:

Failte Ireland would plan to undertake minor works to the service desk in order that it could accommodate two people and to the slat wall area to make it more suitable for brochure racking. They would also install an overhead canopy for internal signage. Work would be required on external signage so both parties could benefit. None of the above costs will be borne by BCC.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Committee agree a licence is granted by BCC to Failte Ireland to occupy the premises of Belfast Welcome Centre alongside BVCB until the lease ends on 31 July 2010.

Decision Tracking

Further to agreement, Legal Services will be instructed to complete the appropriate documentation.

Timeline: March 2010 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

Key to Abbreviations

***BVCB – Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
BCC - Belfast City Council
BWC – Belfast Welcome Centre
TIC – Tourist Information Centre
NITB- Northern Ireland Tourist Board'***

In answer to Members' questions, the Estates Surveyor indicated that the money received from Failte Ireland would not come to the Council but rather would be retained by the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau to off-set its running costs. She pointed out that this would ultimately benefit the Council. The Head of Economic Initiatives stated that, on occasions, other organisations had rented space from the Bureau for short periods

of time in connection with forthcoming events and that, since the Bureau had a target of achieving £1 million in income in the current financial year, the money from Failte Ireland would assist in this regard. She also pointed out that the rental figure had been decided following negotiations between Failte Ireland and the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that a Licence be granted by the Council to Failte Ireland to occupy a portion of the premises within the Belfast Welcome Centre alongside the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau until the lease on the building ended on 31st July."

Councillor N. Kelly, who had requested that the matter be referred back, pointed out that the Committee had approved recently significant funding to the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau for the 2010-2011 financial year. He indicated that, had the Committee been made aware at that time that there was potential income to be received from Failte Ireland for a Licence fee for sharing the premises, then the Committee might have been minded to take that into account when approving the current year's funding to the Bureau. He suggested that the income received from Failte Ireland should be deducted from the Council's payments to the Bureau.

Accordingly, it was

Moved by Councillor N. Kelly,
Seconded by Councillor Convery,

That the Committee agrees to vary its decision of 9th March to the effect that a Licence be granted by the Council to Failte Ireland to occupy the premises of the Belfast Welcome Centre alongside the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau until the lease ends on 31st July, 2010, subject to the annual Licence fee to be paid by Failte Ireland being deducted (on a pro rata basis) from the funding awarded to the Bureau by the Council for the current financial year.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor M. Browne,
Seconded by Councillor C. Maskey,

That the Committee agrees to affirm its decision of 9th March and that a Licence be granted by the Council for Failte Ireland to occupy the premises of the Belfast Welcome Centre alongside the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau until the lease ends on 31st July, 2010.

On a vote by show of hands, three Members voted for the amendment and nine against and it was accordingly declared lost.

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor N. Kelly and seconded by Councillor Convery was thereupon put to the meeting when ten Members voted for and three against and it was accordingly declared carried.

Coach Parking

The Head of Economic Initiatives advised the Committee that a request for funding had been received from the Federation of Passenger Transport Northern Ireland. She explained that the Federation was a small not-for-profit organisation which had been set up to promote passenger transport and coach tourism. It represented 70% of private coach companies in Northern Ireland, involving over 300 coaches, as well as Translink, and worked in partnership with other organisations such as Coach Tourism and the Transport Council in the Republic of Ireland.

She explained that the Federation was seeking support towards the initial set up costs of establishing a new coach parking facility at Donegall Quay, on the site of the old Seacat terminal. The site, which comprised 0.78 acres and which could accommodate 35 large and 5 medium sized coaches, was owned by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners. The Federation planned to secure the area by a series of Closed-Circuit Television cameras with 24 hour surveillance. A new gate would be erected and controlled by a remote keyless entry system, which would be supported by an online booking facility and randomised entrance codes for vehicles. There would be a 24 hour emergency and call out facility.

The Federation's business plan for the Coach Park was based on 50% of the space being allocated to local hotels in Belfast at a cost of £2,000 per annum (£2.74 per day) and the remaining spaces being made available to visiting coaches at a cost of £10.00 per day. The business plan showed a deficit of £8,300 in year one. However, in years two and three the model demonstrated a profit of £7,199 and £12,615 respectively. Any profit would be reinvested into the development/expansion of the facility. Therefore, the Federation was seeking support from the Council towards the initial set up costs, that is, the £8,300 deficit in year one.

The Head of Economic Development stated that at present there were six coach parking bays at College Square North, two bays at Glengall Street and one bay for drop off/hop on at Victoria Square. However, there had been reports of vandalism from coach operators due to lack of secure overnight parking in the City. She indicated that the proposal fitted in well with the draft Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010-2014, which the Committee had approved in February. That Framework had identified the need to sustain quality infrastructure and services across the City, of which coach parking would be an essential requirement. The Framework had identified also the need to exploit the opportunity presented by the Republic of Ireland market and the all island touring market. In both instances, coach operators played an important role in delivering visitors to the City.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board was supportive of the proposal and had agreed in principle to offer support of 25% of the year one deficit on the basis that the Council would cover the remaining 75%.

The Committee agreed to provide a one off payment of £6,230 to the Federation of Passenger Transport Northern Ireland towards the initial set up costs of a coach parking facility at Donegall Quay, subject to any profits accruing in years two and three being reinvested into the facility and on the condition that the coach park would be open to non-Federation members.

Delegated Authority Funding 2009/2010

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided details of projects awarded funding under the Rolling Programme and the Community Festivals Fund by the Director of Development in accordance with the authority delegated to him.

New York – New Belfast Conference

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

Belfast City Council received an invitation from the Belfast Media Group to participate in two conferences in Belfast and New York aimed at showcasing the new Belfast through its Quarters. The first conference took place in Belfast on 24 and 25 March and the second will take place in New York on 9 and 10 June 2010.

Members will be aware that at a meeting of the Development Committee held on 10 February 2010, approval was given for the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Development Committee, or their nominees, plus two officers, to attend the City of Quarters Conference and to sponsor a dinner for conference delegates on 26 March at a cost of no more than £3,000. The conference explored flagship Quarters, asking how they can be linked to each other to create more than the sum of their parts and what is required to ensure that their economic benefits are felt in disadvantaged areas.

Members agreed in principle on 10 February 2010 to participation in the New York conference pending further investigation of costs and potential opportunities for Belfast.

Key Issues

Following on from the City of Quarters Conference in Belfast, the Belfast Media Group and their sister paper the Irish Echo are convening a conference in New York under the title of ‘New York – New Belfast’. The purpose is to forge links between commerce, culture and education as well as profile key developments created through cultural quarters and other opportunities to an influential US audience as well as through the media.

Proposed Programme

The conference will open on 9 June in Fordham University, Manhattan and move to the Ritz Carlton Hotel on 10 June for further plenary sessions. This will be followed by the 3rd annual Ireland-US top 30 companies’ awards sponsored by KPMG. Through Ulster University’s links with Fordham University, students on an entrepreneur’s programme from University of Ulster will be in New York on those dates and will be linked into the conference.

Participants at the conference confirmed by Belfast Media Group include the following:

Christine Quinn	Speaker of New York City Council
Rob Walsh	Commissioner of Small Business Services New York City Council
John Connorton	Head of Friends of Belfast in New York
Niall Gibbons	CEO, Tourism Ireland
Gary Hanley	Senior Vice President Invest NI, New York
Terence Brannigan	Chairman of CBI/NI MD of Resources
Len O'Hagan	Chair of Belfast Port Authority
Mark Finlay	President's Club, Belfast
Paul McErlean	Chair – Cathedral Quarter Steering Group
David Lyle	Lyle Bailie International & Board Member of Tourism Ireland
Patrick Loughrey	Founder of Connect Centre in North Belfast Forward Emphasis
Michael Sorkin	Author of '20 Minutes in Manhattan' and President Emeritus of George Washington University DC (growing relationship between UU & George Washington University)
Fr Joseph McShane	President of Fordham University

Commissioner Walsh will also lead a site visit to Myrtle Avenue in Brooklyn, New York as part of the conference. Members may recall in earlier years BCC met Commissioner Walsh both in New York and in Belfast when he led a trade delegation to Belfast.

Representatives from Strategic Investment Board, Cathedral Quarter, Gaeltacht Quarter, the President's Club, Linen Hall Library, have also indicated their support for the conference and will participate in some form.

Sponsors of the conference include the President's Club, Belfast Strategic Investment Board, Belfast Port Authority as well as US side partners of Irish Business Organisation of New York, Irish Business Association of New Jersey, Irish Network – New York City.

Patrons include Shaun Kelly, Vice Chair of KPMG in USA, Brian O'Dwyer of law firm O'Dwyer and Berstein who advise New York City Comptroller, Liam Lynch of the \$400m company Broadway.com, John O'Reilly of Squire Saunders (32 offices worldwide), John Connorton of Hawkins/Head Friend of Belfast in New York and Delafield and Wood.

The objectives of the conference are:

- To attract sustainable investment to Belfast by highlighting its many assets including access to European markets, highly educated workforce, rich quality of life and its beautiful setting.
- To encourage Irish Americans to deepen their understanding of their heritage by visiting and by learning more about Ireland's culture and history through its colleges and courses.
- To encourage partnerships of mutual advantage between businesses/organisations in New York and Belfast.
- To reignite the Friends of Belfast model and develop ways to keep Irish Americans in the New York region informed of developments in Belfast.

Up to 100 civic and business leaders in New York are the target audience.

It is the intention of the conference to reach out also to all those who have an interest in Belfast, whether as a tourist destination, a place to attend university, trading partner or potential investment location. The conference will tap into the Scots-Irish diaspora through the exhibition planned in conjunction with the Linen Hall Library.

On 8 June, as a prelude to the conference, an exhibition by the Linen Hall Library on the Ulster Scots/Scots-Irish emigration to New York will open. This will take place at the prestigious Fifth Avenue headquarters of the American Irish Historical Society which is partnering the exhibition.

The Belfast Media Group and the President's Club, Belfast also intend to work with the 'Friends of Belfast' to facilitate meetings around the conference. They are seeking the support of Council to revitalize this grouping which was set up in late 90's under the leadership of Belfast City Council.

The format for the conference being organized by the Belfast Media Group is based on a similar programme which took place last year between Derry/Londonderry and Boston comprising representatives from local Chamber of Commerce, City Council and a range of businesses. The conference aimed to re-ignite relationships with Boston which for several years has had a business development relationship with Derry/Londonderry.

Assessment of Proposal

Belfast City Council over the past 15 years has engaged in international relations activity with USA including a number of significant relationships with New York.

Following on from the peace process in the mid 1990's, Belfast City Council took the lead in capitalizing on goodwill and economic prospectors in USA by establishing the Friends of Belfast network. At its peak the network comprised upwards of 350 high profile individuals from the fields of business, academia and politics. John Connorton, an eminent lawyer in New York was and remains the Chair/Head Friend of Belfast in New York. The Friends of Belfast network in the early days took the lead in facilitating targeted initiatives within their respective cities including New York and made significant business introductions which led to new investment in Belfast. John Connorton and other key Friends of Belfast instigated contacts for the Belfast trade missions and assembled high profile audiences for Belfast's presence in New York.

A number of trade missions were also undertaken between cities including New York with the most recent in 2005 where 10 companies from Belfast working in the digital media, television and film sectors participated with the outturn of 32 new business leads identified and over \$500,000 secured for new film and television projects.

Following 2005, Council's focus on international relations through the Friends of Belfast shifted due to budgetary pressures and a reprioritisation of economic development initiatives. Given the wealth of contacts made by Belfast City Council and shared with the business community in Belfast over the years, business people in Belfast have made their own contacts with Friends of Belfast in recent years and pursued collaborative activity with them.

In light of recent announcements from US Government through Declan Kelly the Economic Envoy and Government Departments in Northern Ireland, regarding the renewed commitment to economic investment from USA in NI, this would appear to be an opportune time for Belfast City Council to review its linkages. Both the Belfast Media Group and the President's Club, Belfast are keen for BCC to re-connect with the Friends of Belfast network by giving it new civic endorsement. Naturally BCC will need to consider the resource implications of supporting the Friends of Belfast network in any labour-intensive way however a positive signal by Council to the network may be most easily achieved by backing the business to business relationships that currently are being promoted by the private sector.

Potential Benefits

Council is not being asked to specifically fund the conference although formal endorsement is being sought by Belfast Media Group. There are options for Council to fund and lead on specific elements as part of the programme which are of particular relevance to Council's agenda.

Should Committee be interested in renewing links with New York and capitalizing on the US economic interest in Belfast/region at this point, the conference in New York provides a cost-effective opportunity for Council engagement. Potential opportunities/benefits could include:

- Profiling of key Belfast development and city regeneration initiatives to a US audience.
- Using conference as preparatory ground for future business to business mission in conjunction with Invest NI.
- Re-connecting with senior contacts in the Friends of Belfast network to encourage new investment opportunities.
- Option of hosting of an industry seminar/exhibition on Belfast's key economic sectors.
- Option of undertaking a parallel 'tourism' promotion campaign including sales calls and media/conference market presentations.

Resource Implications

A budget of up to £25,000 is available within the Department's budget towards forging international linkages for business development which would cover the costs of the New York New Belfast Conference including a bespoke seminar/exhibition on Belfast's key economic sectors as well as tourism sales and promotion programme in conjunction with BVCB.

Within this sum, up to £1,400 per person is required for each Council participant to cover travel, accommodation and subsistence.

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider the contents of the above report and to indicate whether they wish to participate in the New York New Belfast Conference. Should Committee be minded to participate in the Conference, Members are asked to consider which, if any, of the following options they wish to support.

1. **Participation in the Conference through the attendance of the Lord Mayor, Chair and Deputy Chair of the Development Committee or their nominees along with up to 3 officers at a cost of £1,400 per participant (Note date of conference 9-10 June 2010).**
2. **Council to host a seminar/exhibition as part of the Conference on Belfast's key economic sectors as a fore-runner to a potential trade mission for small companies from Belfast.**
3. **Council in conjunction with BVCB to be asked to undertake parallel sales programme and media launches on the Belfast product.**

(options 2 and 3 combined equate to £16,600)

Decision Tracking

Further to agreement an update report with itinerary and programme in relation to New York will be brought to Committee.

Timeframe: May 2010

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

Key to Abbreviations

BVCB – Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau”

After discussion, the Committee agreed that it be represented at the conference by the incoming Chairman and the incoming Deputy Chairman (or their nominees), together with two officers and that the budget for the visit be limited to a maximum of £6,500. It was agreed also that full details of the proposed conference programme be circulated to the Members of the Committee prior to the Council meeting scheduled for 4th May.

Milwaukee Irish Festival **Northern Ireland Showcase**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from the organiser of the Milwaukee Irish Festival seeking Belfast to feature as part of its programme in 2010. The Head of Economic Initiatives advised that the Festival was the world's largest annual Irish cultural festival and took place over four days in Wisconsin, America. This year, the Festival, which would be staged from 19th till 22nd August, aimed to promote Irish cultural through music, dance, cultural exhibits, drama and sport. Over 130,000 consumers were expected to visit the Milwaukee Irish Fest, of whom 79% had roots in Ireland, 55% would have visited Ireland before, with 40% planning a visit to the island within the next year.

There were two tourism areas within the 75 acre festival site. Destination Ireland, which was sponsored by Tourism Ireland, and a Northern Ireland Village, which would include a marquee for each County/City showcasing its particular part of Northern Ireland. As part of the 30th anniversary celebrations, Belfast had been asked to be represented as part of a Northern Ireland Showcase. The organiser had requested also that Belfast mount a Titanic Exhibition.

The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that the Milwaukee Irish Festival had approached the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure requesting it to consider funding organisations in Northern Ireland to attend the Showcase. That request was being considered currently by the Department, however, it was unlikely to receive significant investment in 2010.

She reminded the Members that the Titanic Exhibition had first been developed as part of the Smithsonian event in 2007. It was owned by National Museums Northern Ireland and had been in storage for the previous few years. Tourism Ireland, in partnership with National Museums, was currently looking at updating the exhibition, with a view to displaying it in the Grand Central Station, New York in September, 2010. The costs associated with that would be in the region of £300,000 and it was considered to be unlikely, at this stage, that those partners would consider participating in the Milwaukee Irish Fest due to timing and budget constraints. National Museums had indicated that it could supply some exhibition content if the production and erection could be covered by the organisers of the Festival. Whilst the Festival would not have any budget to put towards these costs, it would have the skill and resources to erect the exhibition on site.

The Head of Economic Initiatives pointed out that the Northern Ireland Tourist Board had established a Titanic 2012 Marketing Group to identify marketing opportunities between now and 2012 in order to promote the Titanic. It had not included the Milwaukee Festival as part of its plans, although it had acknowledged its potential. The Belfast and Visitor Convention Bureau had included £5,000 towards attending the Festival as part of its Marketing Plan 2010. Having discussed that with representatives of the Bureau, it had been ascertained that they were keen to go to the event to explore the opportunities which it could present for Belfast in the future. The Bureau could liaise with the National Museums Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to source some exhibition materials to promote Belfast and the Titanic.

The Committee agreed that it would not participate in this year's programme but rather await the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau's analysis of the event before considering any possible Council involvement in future years.

Titanic Anchor

The Committee was advised that Twenty Twenty Television was producing a programme entitled "We Built Titanic" for Channel 4. As part of the programme, they were commissioning reproductions of certain elements of the Titanic, that is, the bow structure, the anchor, the first class smoking room and a third class cabin. The bow structure was likely to be constructed during a week long build at the Northern Ireland Science Park and the third and first class rooms would be constructed at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. The anchor would be made to scale at Forgemasters in Sheffield since that was one of only a few places capable of undertaking such work. Once it had been completed, the plan was to transport the anchor from the ferry in Belfast to Queen's Island, thereby repeating its historic journey complete with Shire Horses and wooden dray, and then find a significant location where the anchor could be erected temporarily, if not permanently.

The Head of Economic Initiatives advised that the producers were looking for a long-term home in Belfast for the Titanic anchor and had approached the Council to gauge interest. The cost of producing the Anchor was approximately £50,000 and the production company was seeking to recoup some of those costs and had quoted a price of £20,000 for the Council to secure the anchor, which would be an excellent piece of public art. There might be some additional costs associated with its installation depending on the site chosen.

Council officers had discussed the proposal with representatives of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Arts Council for Northern Ireland and they believed it was an excellent idea. It was felt that there might be opportunities to request financial support from those organisations as well as from the Titanic Quarter Limited, which had a public arts scheme, and the Odyssey Trust. If the Committee were minded to provide an initial budget, it was felt also that this would enable funding to be levered from other agencies.

The Committee agreed to provide £6,000 towards the purchase of the replica Titanic anchor, subject to the remaining costs being provided by other funders and organisations.

Development Outreach Initiative 2010/2011

The Head of Economic Initiatives reminded the Committee that the Council's Development and Outreach Initiative Grants were designed to build capacity and to boost cultural activity in communities with weak cultural and arts infrastructure. She advised the Committee that a budget of £166,500 had been established for the 2010/11 year. However, twenty applications requesting funding of £342,392.55 had been received. Due to the high standard of the submissions, only those projects scoring over 60% had been recommended for assistance.

Accordingly, following the application and assessment process, it was recommended that the following awards be made:

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Total Score</u>	<u>Amount Requested (£)</u>	<u>Recommendation (£)</u>
ArtsEkta	0	13,875	0
Belfast Exposed	58.8	8,050	0
Beyond Skin	0	12,000	0
Cinemagic Ltd	62	20,000	13,562
First Steps Playgroup and Parent & Toddler Group	54.2	19,336.80	0
Greater Village Regeneration Trust	61.6	19,231.00	14,345
Greater Shankill Partnership	64	20,000	13,807
Live Music Now Ireland	68	20,000	14,000
Lower North Belfast Community Council	0	19,875	0
Moving on Music	60.2	9,775	7,820

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Total Score</u>	<u>Amount Requested (£)</u>	<u>Recommendation (£)</u>
New Lodge Arts	0	19,958.25	0
North Belfast Interface Network	67	19,500	11,475
Prime Cut Productions	68.2	20,000	14,611
Queen's Film Theatre	63.2	11,713.50	8,186
Streetwise Community Circus Workshops	68.4	15,730	13,371
The Beat Initiative	72.2	20,000	17,030
Tinderbox Theatre Company	62.8	20,000	11,291
Trans Urban Arts	62.2	17,000	13,220
Ulster Orchestra Society Limited	58.2	19,958	0
Youth Action	67	16,390	13,932

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Cultural Night

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report in relation to Cultural Night 2010 to enable officers to discuss further with the organisers how the event would be delivered on the arterial routes in the City.

European Connected Health Campus – Request for Sponsorship

The Committee was advised that the European Connected Health Campus, which was located at the Northern Ireland Science Park in Belfast, was seeking sponsorship from the Council towards the cost of the holding of the European Connected Health Leadership Summit, which would take place in Belfast on 15th and 16th June. The Summit was part of a week-long programme of activities and events relating to connected health which included a Connected Health Expo and the Continua Health Alliance Annual Conference. It was expected that at least 250 delegates from across the world would be in Belfast to attend the event. The Campus was funded by its Members and supported also by Invest Northern Ireland and by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. The event, which would cost approximately £140,000, would be resourced by public and private sponsorship as well as participant contributions. The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 19th March, had agreed to allow the Campus to hold a welcome reception in the City Hall on 15th June and to provide a contribution towards the cost of the drinks reception.

The Committee agreed to provide funding of £5,000 towards the cost of holding the event.

**Belfast Employability and
Skills Strategy and Action Plan**

The Committee was advised that, at its meeting on 9th March, it had agreed to defer consideration of a report regarding the preparation of a Belfast Employability and Skills Strategy and Action Plan to enable those Party Groupings who so wished to receive briefings on the matter. The Director of Development reported that, whilst a number of briefings had been held, there were a number of other Groups which still had to receive the briefing. Accordingly, he recommended that, to enable this process to be completed, the Committee defer consideration of the matter and that a further report be submitted in due course.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Consultation – Proposed New and Extension to
Existing Public Hire Taxis Ranks**

The Committee was advised that the Department for Regional Development was considering currently the potential for the provision of new or extended taxi ranks in the City and was seeking comments thereon from the Council. The ranks would be for the use of Belfast Public Hire taxis only. The proposed changes to taxi legislation did not indicate any extension to taxi ranks for use by standard Private Taxi Hire.

The Planning and Transport Policy Manager provided for the information of the Members copies of maps outlining the proposed locations and the times during which the new ranks would operate.

The Committee agreed that an appropriate draft response be formulated for its consideration at the meeting on 12th May.

St. George's Market

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“Relevant Background Information

This combined report comprises two items:

1. Proposal for Sunday Market in St George’s

Update to Members on the proposed Sunday Market in St George's Market.

2. Requirement for mobile wash hand facilities

The Markets Unit currently supply a small number of shared mobile wash hand facilities to food traders who currently trade at the markets.

At a recent meeting with Environmental Health Food Safety Unit, Markets management were informed that to meet current Chartered Institute of Environmental Health requirements some of these traders need their own individual mobile units, due to possible risk of contamination and/or risk of food poisoning.

Key Issues

1. Proposal for Sunday Market in St George's

Members will be aware from previous reports that the traders in St George's market have been championing plans for an additional market on a Sunday to be added to the existing weekly schedule. Research into the level of interest in a Sunday market has been undertaken with 84 existing traders having confirmed their intentions to date.

The traders who have shown interest are eager to acquire approval and support from Council as quickly as possible in advance of the summer season to enable them to forward plan their trading commitments from June onwards. A number of the traders have been approached by other markets across the region and beyond, regarding trading at other Sunday markets; their preference is largely to trade at St George's however should this not be agreed by Council they wish to know as soon as possible to allow them to avail of opportunities at locations outside Belfast.

St George's Market traders propose to trade from 10am to late afternoon on a Sunday. They are mindful of Council's work in encouraging Sunday leisure activities through our work in cultural tourism on creating things for locals and visitors to enjoy on Sundays in association with our other programming that is underway or planned. The type of market envisaged is a mix between Friday and Saturday traders. However, space permitting other traders not currently part of St George's will be included.

A number of external organisations have already made bookings for use of St George's on a Sunday throughout the year including some which are now annual events. Precedence will be given to existing bookings and to supporting cultural festivals including Chinese New Year, Holi and the India Festival which use St George's on a Sunday.

Feasibility of Market

Given the level of interest from existing traders in operating a Sunday market, the proposal would appear feasible. At this point, the operational costs directly pertaining to the market would largely be covered from income generation via stall hire fees for Sunday.

Fees per stall are proposed at the present rate of £13.00 per stall plus £3.00 for electricity usage. Quarterly payment in advance would also be encouraged to encourage regular attendance by traders and assist with cashflow.

Car parking is an issue that would require management in order to avoid any adverse consequences from neighbouring communities.

Other costs which would require coverage include car parking and marketing; assuming the optimum level of trade interest of at least 120 stalls being used, then these costs would also be covered by the income from a Sunday market or met from a re-alignment of existing budgets.

The Principal Solicitor is of the view that the proposed market is unlikely to fall foul of current legislation in relation to Sunday opening hours. There may however be concerns on the part of Councillors, members of the public, businesses or residents within the Markets area in relation to the market operating from 10am or on a Sunday at all. These concerns may include, amongst other issues, the Council's role in enforcing Sunday trading legislation which only permits shops above a certain size to operate between the hours of 1pm-6pm. To measure opinion informal consultation with local Churches and Community Groups is underway. There may also be other legal issues in relation to the operation of a Sunday market. Approval for the Market will be subject to the result of the informal consultation and to any requirements or steps deemed necessary by the Principal Solicitor.

In order to ascertain local support for the opening of a Sunday Market in St George's, informal consultation has been undertaken with the following:

Markets Development Association
St Malachy's Church
Markets Community Centre (This is for display on notice boards)
Chinese Community Centre
May Street Church
BCCM
Belfast Chamber of Commerce
Cathedral Quarter Steering Group
Donegall Pass Community Forum
South West Neighbourhood Partnership

Updates will be presented at Committee on feedback received to date.

Assessment of Proposal

Given the interest of existing traders in operating a Sunday market there is the potential for a new and additional 'Sunday' activity to be added to the events programming within Belfast. Members are aware that criticisms have been made by tourists over several years about the lack of activity in the city on a Sunday especially in the mornings and early afternoon.

Having examined the legal and financial implications, the proposal for a Sunday market in St George's also appears feasible. Traders are anxious for an early decision in advance of the summer so as not to compromise their earning capacity over these months. Consultation with local stakeholders has been instigated with no early signs of significant dissent however Members will be fully updated at Committee. The only apparent issue giving rise to some debate is around the opening hours of the market

Resource Implications

Finance:

Approximately £1,550 per week extra income which should cover all operational costs.

Recommendations

Members are asked to support the operation of a Sunday Market in St George's for a trial basis from June to September 2010 for either the hours of:

- a) 10.00am to 4pm/5pm
- b) 1-5pm/6pm

Decision Tracking

Further to Committee agreement and subject to the results of the informal consultation and to any legal requirements or other additional steps deemed necessary by the Principal Solicitor, to hold a Sunday Market in St George's.

Time Frame: June 2010.
Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

2. Requirement for mobile wash hand facilities

The Markets Unit currently supply a small number of free mobile wash hand facilities to food traders currently trading at the markets. One unit is shared between two or three traders. At a recent meeting with Environmental Health Food Safety Unit Markets management where informed that to meet current Chartered Institute of Environmental Health requirements many traders need to have use of an individual mobile unit, i.e. not shared, due to possible contamination or risk of food poisoning. Food safety has advised Markets Management that it is the responsibility of the trader to supply their own facilities. Food traders' regulations require them to have proper washing facilities at their stall when trading.

Mobile hand wash facilities cost approximately £600 per unit. Markets Management would offer food traders the following:

Option 1

Traders provide or purchase their own mobile unit which they bring to and remove from the market at end of each day of trading.

Option 2

The markets unit purchase the units and rent to the trader at a cost of £5.00 each trading day (this fee will include electricity). This charge will also be attached to existing, fully serviced, wash hand facilities which are currently provided.

If all the mobile units are rented out, the Markets unit would recoup the initial expenditure in just over one year. The markets unit currently has 12 mobile units.

Markets Management will write to all food traders concerned and inform them of the new Environmental Health requirements and the time lines involved. Markets Management are working closely with Environmental Health Food Safety on this issue

Resource Implications

£26000 initial cost to purchase new mobile wash units. This amount would be recouped with rental charges.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members agree to the purchase of the mobile units and further agree to rent the units to the Markets Traders at a fixed fee of £5.00 per unit per trading day.

Decision Tracking:

Further to agreement the MDO purchase additional wash hand units for rental to Markets traders

Time Frame: April 2010

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

Key to Abbreviations

NMTF – National Market Traders Federation

MDO – Markets Development Officer

BCC – Belfast City Council

MPEL – Market Place Europe Ltd”

After discussion, the Committee agreed to:

- (i) the opening of a Sunday market in St. George's for a trial basis from June till September, 2010 during the hours of 10.00 a.m. till 4.00/5.00 p.m.; and
- (ii) purchase mobile wash hand units for St. George's market and that these be rented to the market traders at a fixed fee of £5.00 per unit per trading day, with a report, detailing the number of units purchased and the total cost and potential income, being submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

Belfast City Marathon

The Committee was reminded that the Belfast City Marathon had been arranged since 1982 by an organising committee involving the Council, Athletics Northern Ireland and other partners and sponsors. Since its inauguration, the Council had co-sponsored the event, with £40,000 having been allocated for the 2010 event. The event traditionally takes place on the first bank holiday Monday in May and in recent years overall participation in the event had risen dramatically. However, the Chairman of Belfast City Marathon Limited had written to the Council seeking support to change the Marathon event day to a Sunday.

The Head of City Events and Venues reported that when the marathon had first commenced in the early 1980s, the May Bank Holiday Monday had been a quiet day for the City. However, that was no longer the case and Bank Holiday Mondays were now, for the most part, treated as normal working days. By the nature of the range of events delivered by Belfast City Marathon Limited on that day, there was considerable disruption to transport, traffic and commerce in the City. There were a number of reasons supporting a switch to a Sunday which included:

- (i) all major international marathons were held on a Sunday. International marathon participants were accustomed to and preferred to visit and participate in major City marathons over a weekend, which enabled them to return home without sacrificing their Monday's at work;

- (ii) the costs of policing, as highlighted by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, would be reduced greatly should the event switch to a Sunday. That had become a major issue affecting the level of support and resources which the Police could make available to the event; and
- (iii) there would be much less disruption to the City on a Sunday when the bulk of the event would be completed by 1.00 p.m. Retailers were not open before 1.00 p.m. on a Sunday and most other businesses were closed.

In addition, Belfast City Marathon Limited had received letters of support for the proposed change to a Sunday from Translink, the Department for Regional Development Roads Division, Belfast Centre Management and the event's key organising partner, Athletics Northern Ireland.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to support Belfast City Marathon Limited's proposal to switch the Belfast Marathon event to take place on a Sunday from May, 2011 onwards.

Corporate Poverty Strategy

The Director of Development advised the Members that a Corporate Poverty Strategy was being developed currently and it was felt that it would be appropriate to hold Party Briefings prior to a report on the Strategy being submitted to the Committee and he recommended accordingly.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Chairman