

# Development Committee

Wednesday, 12th May, 2010

## MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Humphrey (Chairman); and  
Councillors M. Browne, Campbell, Convery, Crozier, Ekin,  
N. Kelly, Kirkpatrick, Kyle, C. Maskey, McCausland,  
Mac Giolla Mhín, Mhic Giolla Mhín, Mullaghan, O'Reilly,  
Rodgers, Rodway and Stoker.

Also attended: Councillor D. Browne.

In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;  
Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Committee Administrator.

### Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Lavery).

### Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 13th and 14th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th May, subject to the omission of the minutes of the meeting of 14th April under the headings:

- (i) "New York – New Belfast Conference" which, at the request of Councillor Robinson, had been referred back to the Committee for further consideration;
- (ii) "St. George's Market" which, at the request of Councillor Newton, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration; and
- (iii) "Belfast City Marathon" which, at the request of Councillor D. Browne, had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration.

### Expressions of Sympathy

The Chairman (Councillor Humphrey) expressed his regret at the recent deaths of the brother of the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Lavery) and the brother of Councillor Smyth and, on behalf of the Committee, extended to the respective families his condolences and deepest sympathy.

### **New York – New Belfast Conference**

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 14th April under the heading “New York – New Belfast Conference”, a copy of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

*“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:*

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

*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."*

The Committee was advised that Councillor Robinson, who had requested that the matter be referred back, was unable to attend the meeting. However, a Member explained that Councillor Robinson had indicated that he had concerns regarding the costs associated with the visit and any potential benefits which would be derived.

The view was expressed that the Committee had approved, earlier in the year, a budget which was to be used towards forging international linkages for business development and any concerns about the appropriateness of such a budget commitment should have been discussed at that time. The view was expressed also that a more strategic approach should be taken in considering visits of this type and all such proposed visits should be set out for the year in advance to enable the Committee to decide on which would be meritorious.

Several Members made the point that visits to America had in the past resulted in many benefits to the City through increased investment, the creation of jobs, support for the private sector and the development of significant relationships with other cities.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Rodgers,  
Seconded by Councillor Kirkpatrick,

That the Committee agrees to amend its decision of 14th April to the effect that it be represented at the Conference by the incoming Chairman and the Director of Development (or their nominees).

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

### **St. George's Market**

The Committee considered further the minute of 14th April under the heading "St. George's Market". An extract of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

*"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.”*

The Committee was advised that Councillor Newton, at whose request the matter had been taken back, had not been able to attend the meeting. However, he had requested that the Committee consider deferring the matter for a period of one month to enable a further report to be submitted on the overall costs to the Council of the operation of the St. George’s Market. This would allow any decision in relation to the opening on a Sunday not to be taken in isolation but rather in the context of the total costs and income associated with the Market.

During discussion, the Director of Development advised the Members that that information had been provided to Councillor Newton and if the Committee were minded to affirm its decision of 14th April then the information could be circulated to the Members of the Committee prior to the Council meeting scheduled for 1st June.

Moved by Councillor Crozier,  
Seconded by Councillor McCausland,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the matter to enable a further report in relation to the total operational costs and income associated with the operation of the St. George's Market to be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

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

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to affirm its decision of 14th April.

### **Belfast City Marathon**

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

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 14th April under the heading "Belfast City Marathon", a copy of the minute in this regard is set out hereunder:

*"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 being 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."*

The Chairman (Councillor Humphrey) tabled for the information of the Members a copy of a letter which had been received from the Moderator of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, expressing concern at the Committee's decision to support the switching of the event to a Sunday and indicating that many churchgoers and Christians would no longer be able to give the event their full support. Accordingly, the Moderator had requested the Committee to reconsider its decision.

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor D. Browne, at whose request the matter had been taken back for further consideration, advised the Committee that he had received many complaints in relation to the Committee's decision, particularly from faith-based organisations and groups which had not been consulted on the matter and therefore he was requesting that the Committee rescind its decision and agree that the Marathon continue to be held on the first bank holiday Monday in May.

Several Members expressed the view that the event had always been held on that date and had been highly successful. The reasons given for switching the event, such as the costs of policing, could be addressed easily through the use of civilian marshals. In addition, consideration could be given to changing the timing and the route of the event to cause less disruption on the bank holiday Monday rather than move the event to a Sunday. The point was made also that consultation with the faith-based communities, groups and organisations should have been a major consideration of the organisers before proposing to change the day of the event.

In response, the Events Manager pointed out that the 2011 event was due to be launched in June and if the Committee were minded to change its decision it could request Belfast City Marathon Limited to continue to hold the event on the bank holiday Monday in 2011, which would allow time for proper consultation to take place on whether or not to switch the marathon to a Sunday in future years.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed to rescind its decision of 14th April to support Belfast City Marathon Limited's proposal to switch the Belfast Marathon Event to take place on a Sunday from May, 2011 onwards and accordingly agreed that the Company be requested to postpone any move to switching the Belfast City Marathon to a Sunday until after 2011, which would allow the Company to launch the 2011 event next month and enable it to consult with all interested parties with regard to any proposed changes for the 31st Belfast City Marathon in 2012. In addition, there would be no commitment by the Council to support any potential change prior to the completion of such consultation.

### **British Telecom Presentation**

The Committee was reminded that it had agreed previously to receive from representatives of British Telecom a presentation regarding the development of its superfast broadband and its potential impact on business in the City. Accordingly, Mr. J. Manifold, on behalf of the Organisation, was admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr. Manifold advised the Members that the aim of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's next generation broadband project was to deliver against the Northern Ireland Executive's commitment in the Programme for Government which was "to work with the business sector to deliver widespread access for businesses to a next generation broadband network by 2011." The project aimed to provide this service in areas of the Province in which those services were not available or were unlikely to be available in the foreseeable future. This would lead to Next Generation Broadband "NGB" products being available to businesses in those areas, with services which would be affordable, sustainable and scalable.

Mr. Manifold outlined the scope of the project, how it would be rolled out throughout Northern Ireland businesses, the total investment required, the targets to be achieved in terms of availability of the faster broadband speeds, the timescales and how the project would be implemented. In conclusion, he stated that the provision of access to faster broadband across the business community in Northern Ireland would stimulate the economy and support regional development, with the Project being seen as a blueprint for the future implementation of projects of a similar nature across the rest of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Manifold then answered a number of questions from the Members and retired from the meeting.

### **SS Nomadic**

The Committee was reminded that in May, 2006 the Minister for the Department of Social Development had announced the creation of the Nomadic Trust which would oversee the development and restoration of the SS Nomadic and was comprised of representatives of the public, private and voluntary sectors, including the Council.

In March, 2007, the Council had agreed that the project should be funded to the sum of £250,000. That approval resulted in an initial payment of £50,000, which was followed by three further tranches of £50,000.



The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that the Council had now been requested by the Nomadic Trust to release the final tranche of £50,000. In order to safeguard the Council's investment, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed a five-step funding arrangement. The first tranche of the funding had been made when the Nomadic had opened to visitors. The second had been set against the development of economic appraisal on the future of the ship, which had been completed and approved by the Council. The third step required funding agreements being signed, with the fourth stage involving the release of funding for the creation of conservation management and for ongoing restoration of the vessel. The Council had now been requested to release its final payment to the Trust towards the preparation for full restoration.

The Committee agreed to provide £50,000 to the Nomadic Trust as the final tranche of the £250,000 funding which had been agreed by the former Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 23rd March, 2007.

#### **Departmental Plan 2010-11**

The Director of Development submitted for the Committee's approval the Department's Business Plan 2010-11.

A Member suggested that the Committee consider deferring the matter to enable Party Group briefings on the Plan to be undertaken.

#### **Proposal**

Moved by Councillor C. Maskey,  
Seconded by Councillor Mhic Giolla Mhín,

That the Committee agrees to approve the Department's Business Plan for 2010-11 and that Party Group briefings be held for those who so wished prior to the meeting of the Council on 1st June.

#### **Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Stoker,  
Seconded by Councillor Rodgers,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the Development Departmental Business Plan 2010-11 to enable Party Group briefings on the Plan to be undertaken.

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

The Amendment was thereupon put as the substantive motion when eleven Members voted for and none against and it was accordingly declared carried.

### Northern Ireland Tourism Strategy Consultation

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### “Relevant Background Information

The NI Tourist Board (NITB) has produced a draft Strategy through to 2020. The vision for the strategy is to ‘Create the new Northern Ireland experience and get it on everyone’s destination wish list.’ The overall target associated with this vision is to double the income earned from tourism by 2020.

More specifically there are targets to:

- increase visitors from 3.2 million to 4.5 million by 2020
- increase earnings from tourism from £536 million (based on NITB figures) to £1 billion by 2020
- progressively accelerate spend by visitors targeting specific markets and market segments
- support indigenous high quality businesses to grow; and
- be visitor inspired in all our actions.

There are three fundamental elements that run through the strategy. They are to:

Value Tourism: this means understanding that it is a key economic sector, providing government support at every level and ensuring that there is an enabling attitude to investment and development.

Value the Tourist: provide the best experience possible through a commitment to quality and offering professional training and development to the industry.

Value what the Tourist Values: this means protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment for the benefit of future visitors and residents.

The action plan associated with the strategy is arranged under four themes. The first three are:

People: ‘how we will work with the people of Northern Ireland to develop a visitor experience that is unique and an industry that has pride and professionalism.’

Product & Places: ‘how we will invest in our product and places to make them better for residents and ready to receive the visitors of the future.’

**Promotion:** ‘the actions we will take, with our partners in Tourism Ireland, to bring new visitors and to welcome back visitors to see a place that is confidently moving on.’

The fourth theme cuts across these and is:

**Partnership:** ‘actions to identify the roles and responsibilities of businesses and agencies and set out how we monitor progress.’

The strategy is planned to deliver the outcomes shown on the following table.

**Outcomes for 2020**

<u>Markets</u>	<u>Market Segments</u>	<u>Industry</u>	<u>Products</u>
<p>4.5m visitors of which 3.1m are Out of State. Income of £1bn. Tourism sector direct GVA contribution of 2.6%. 50% visitors from closer to home markets. 2% emerging markets. N. America and Germany key source markets. 1.4m visits made by NI residents - throughout the year.</p>	<p>Event led short breaks especially younger audience from UK/ ROI. Mature culture/experience seekers from UK and Europe. Extended families from domestic market, ROI and GB. Conference and Exhibition delegates. ‘Eco’ travellers especially from Germany seeking untouched landscapes. ‘Hobby’ visitors especially music, gardens, angling, golf, cruising, walking, cycling wellness and rejuvenation breaks with a luxury element. ‘Foodies’ inspired by the quality of raw materials and local chefs.</p>	<p>An additional 12,000 jobs. Young celebrity chefs and hoteliers a feature of the industry. Professionally managed visitor attractions. Pay on a par with other service sector employers (retail, distribution). High status careers with low job vacancy rates and competition for training posts. Productivity and profitability closer to UK industry average. Integrated development plans with sharing of expertise the norm. Industry leading the UK in adoption of sustainable business practices. NI brand and values incorporated into all marketing.</p>	<p>More accommodation unique to Northern Ireland. Award winning, indigenous businesses. Locally owned restaurants with rooms using local produce. State of the art interpretation at Signature Destinations. Year round events programme with local artists at the heart. Local people directly involved in creating the visitor welcome. Gateways to NI with award winning welcome. Local food, drink and products available everywhere. New product coming on stream continuously.</p>

The full 38 page version of the plan is available online at:  
[http://www.detini.gov.uk/ni\\_tourism\\_20100308-4.pdf](http://www.detini.gov.uk/ni_tourism_20100308-4.pdf)

There is also a supporting 'facts and figures' document online at: [http://www.detini.gov.uk/final\\_supporting\\_evidence\\_260210-2.pdf](http://www.detini.gov.uk/final_supporting_evidence_260210-2.pdf)

Officers from the Council have been involved in the development of the NITB strategy through various mechanisms such as workshops, informal consultation and the development of our own Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010-2014 (considered by Committee on 8/2/10 and currently out for further consultation to be resubmitted in June 2010). Consequently, the NITB strategy aligns very closely with our own tourism plans and objectives.

### Key Issues

Due to the close alignment of the NITB strategy with our own, officers believe that it is a sensible strategy for developing tourism and the associated economic benefits. However, the strategy could be further strengthened by:

- Further consideration of the targets, especially the inclusion of job creation targets.
- Further consideration of direct air and sea access and internal transport links.
- Recognition for the Belfast and Northern Ireland Welcome Centre.
- Recognition of the Council's investment in promoting tourism.
- Further consideration and evaluation of the segments within the tourism market.
- Recognition of the role the Council has in supporting people development in tourism e.g. the HARTE programme.
- Consideration of support for small business start-ups to provide additional tourism product.
- Appreciation of the partnership opportunities between the private and public sector and improved access to the minister.
- Potential support for integrated' convention and exhibition facilities.
- Recognition of, and support for, four capital projects Crumlin Road Gaol, Belfast Hills & Belfast Zoo, a National Art Gallery and the Lagan Canal.
- Additional support for parks and leisure sites.
- Increased reference to the tourism potential of waterways.

### Resource Implications

There are no resource costs associated with this consultation response. However, it does provide an opportunity to show how the NITB and Council could work together in the future and so create efficiencies.

### Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Approve the basic content and structure of the draft consultation response (attachment 1) and;
- To suggest additional comments to include in the response to the NITB.

### Decision Tracking

Subject to approval, the draft response, together with any additional suggestions will be returned to the NITB by the 22 May 2010.

Timeframe: 22 May 2010 Reporting Officer: Barbary Cook

### Documents Attached

Appendix 1: Draft Belfast City Council response to the proposed NITB Tourism Strategy to 2020.

### Appendix 1

#### Draft Tourism strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 – Consultation Response

Thank you for providing Belfast City Council the opportunity to comment on the Northern Ireland Tourism Strategy 2020. Belfast City Council's overarching response is the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010 – 2014, attached as Appendix 1. Over the last 18 months Belfast City Council has worked in partnership with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to develop this 5 year tourism strategy for the city to inform government priorities and strategy. The Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010 – 2014 provides a clear direction for tourism in the city and has been approved in its draft format by both organisations. It has recently been the focus of a consultation exercise with the aim of finalising and launching before the summer.

Our response also includes a brief summary of tourism in Belfast (including Belfast City Council's role) and our comments on the specific questions posed as part of the consultation exercise.

#### **1.0 Summary of Tourism in Belfast**

Each year, Belfast welcomes over 7 million day trip and overnight visitors generating approximately £500 million of revenue into the local economy. Over the last decade, the city has grown significantly in respect of its tourism offer and infrastructure. We offer a choice of accommodation including 27 hotels, a range of high quality visitor experiences and attractions and the city is serviced by two international airports as well as the Port of Belfast.

Belfast City Council has and continues to recognize the importance of tourism. We own and operate many of the city's (and region's) key tourism assets including Belfast Zoo, St George's Market, Belfast Waterfront Hall, Ulster Hall, City Hall, Belfast Castle, Malone House and Belfast Parks (e.g. Lady Dixon, Botanic Gardens and Ormeau). We have an established £multi million events programme for the city, we provide a range of financial support programmes for the culture and arts sector and when appropriate we provide capital support for key projects e.g. Titanic Signature Project, Lyric Theatre, Connswater Greenway and the MAC.

Belfast City Council has taken the lead in developing a range of tourism products featuring music, literature, culture & arts, food and retail. We have also led the way in maximising new technologies and recent product developments include a new Belfast Music iphone app and we are currently working on a Belfast Literary iphone app.

Belfast City Council continues to support the development and promotion of a vibrant evening economy which gives leisure and business visitors more opportunity to spend money in local businesses. Belfast City Council works in partnership with key stakeholders through the Retail and Evening Economy Steering Group chaired by Belfast City Centre Management. Over recent years, Belfast City Council has invested significantly in developing the city's evening and Sunday economy. We have negotiated late night opening with our major retailers to 7pm weeknights and 9pm on Thursdays; Victoria Square open to 9pm Wednesday – Friday. Belfast offers early bird menus, shopping voucher schemes and all year round city centre events and animation programme.

In recognising the importance of partnership, Belfast City Council was instrumental in establishing Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB) as a public / private sector partnership to drive marketing/promotion of the city as a business and leisure tourism destination. BVCB also operates the Belfast Welcome Centre – Northern Ireland’s flagship gateway tourist information centre which receives over 350,000 visitors per annum - as well as the two tourist information points at the airports. BVCB has over 400 private sector members.

In 2008, Belfast City Council undertook an extensive consultation exercise to develop the new Belfast Brand. The Belfast Brand Proposition is of a city in which ‘A unique history and a future full of promise have come together to create a city bursting with energy and optimism’. The core values of the brand are:

- A dynamic city with a big personality between the mountains and the sea
- A city proud of its heritage... is alive with possibilities and open to change ... vibrant, energetic and exciting
- The people of Belfast provide a welcome which is not just warm, but genuine and generous, inviting anyone and everyone to join in
- Belfast provides a vivid and memorable experience with new things to discover every time you visit

The motivating appeals of the brand are: heritage & culture, authenticity, welcoming people, distinctive character, relaxed style, discovery, natural countryside, water and urban environments.

## 2.0 Questions

2.1 Your reaction to the key target to grow visitor revenue to £1 billion by 2020. Do you agree that the five critical success factors set out on section 3 of the strategy will deliver this target i.e.

- Earning more from visitors
- Investing in development – both capital projects and business skills
- Targeted marketing
- Policy support from government and its agencies
- Industry leadership

Belfast City Council has experienced tremendous growth in tourism over the last decade and we are confident that the city will continue to attract high volumes of visitors to the city and grow visitor revenue. At present the city attracts over 7 million day trip and overnight visitors generating £500 million revenue. It is important that the national targets can be broken down to reflect the contribution of key areas / themes to support future investment decisions. At present, Belfast City Council and NITB has agreed the targets in Table 1 for growth over the next 5 years as outlined in the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010 – 2014 however there must be alignment between Northern Ireland and Belfast targets and we would welcome guidance from the Department on this before our Framework is published.

**Table 1 Targets for Belfast 2010 – 2014**

Growth Targets	2008		Low		Medium		High	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	
Total Overnight Visitors	1.6M	20	1.92M	30	2.08M	40	2.24M	
Holiday Visitors	0.5M	40	0.71M	50	0.77M	60	0.82M	
Nights	5.1 M	10	5,600,000	15	5,850,000	20	6,100,000	
Spend	£201M	10	£231M	15	£245m	20	£261m	

We would agree with the five critical success factors and we are already delivering a range of actions to support these. However we would make the following comments:

- There should be more focus on developing direct air and sea access to Belfast/Northern Ireland. This is vital if Belfast is to compete as an attractive city break and conference destination.
- There should be more focus on developing access between Dublin and Belfast and internal transport networks. Increasing rail and bus links and improving evening services. Translink and the private sector should be identified as partners.
- The Belfast and Northern Ireland Welcome Centre, which has been in operation since 1999, plays a key role in maximising visitor spend from its central location in Donegall Square and at the airport Tourist Information Centres. Already these facilities play a key role in cross selling, retailing local crafts and souvenirs, ticketing of events and festivals and promoting special deals. The Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010 – 2014 identifies the need to move the centre to ground floor location and further align services to maximise visitor spend opportunities. DETI should recognise that this is a flagship centre for Belfast and Northern Ireland and offers huge potential to drive visitor spend.



- **Belfast City Council has invested significantly in creating new experiences for visitors. These have included Late Night Art, Belfast Music Tour, Belfast Music Exhibition, Belfast Literary Tour, Belfast Bred to name but a few. These are innovative products that promote cross selling whilst also providing an authentic, personal experience for visitors. Our approach has been to kickstart these initiatives with public sector support however it is clear that there are commercial opportunities for the private sector. DETI should consider further investment in tailored support programmes for small business start ups to encourage entrepreneurs and private sector investment.**

**2.2. Whether you support the 3 priorities for Action (People, Product and Places, Promotion) within the Strategy and associated actions within the Action Plan.**

**Belfast City Council supports these priorities which are also reflected in the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010 – 2014.**

**2.2.1 People**

**More focus should be given to the role of Local Authorities under the theme of people. Belfast City Council is in its third year of delivering the HARTE Programme which aims at getting long term unemployed into the hospitality sector. To date we have had 154 trainees who have completed the course and 57 are now in employment.**

**It is essential that we deliver a personal welcome for all visitors to Belfast City Council owned sites. Belfast Castle, Malone House and the Zoo have all been awarded various awards for customer excellence and we are committed to ensuring these high standards and setting standards for the industry across Belfast.**

**2.2.2 Product and Places**

**Belfast City Council has played a key role in developing the Titanic (Maritime) Belfast Signature Project and agrees that 2012 offers a significant opportunity for Belfast. We are already discussing our events programme for 2012 and working with a broad range of culture and arts organisations. We believe that the Titanic (Maritime) Signature 'Destination' is Belfast and that Belfast City Council and our partners, Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau should be identified as playing a key role in delivering the 2012 opportunity.**

Priority D2 refers to Belfast City Council and BVCB taking the lead in developing a Convention Centre and exhibition facility in Belfast to exploit the potential of Business Tourism. The emphasis should be on 'integrated' convention and exhibition facilities and if a viable option is agreed for the city, this will require capital support from government.

The Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework identifies a further 4 capital projects for investment if Belfast is to compete as a leading tourism destination. These include the development of Crumlin Road Gaol, Belfast Hills & Belfast Zoo, a National Art Gallery and the Lagan Canal. These should be identified in the Northern Ireland Tourism Strategy 2020 as they are beyond the remit of Belfast City Council and will require a joined up approach between local and central government.

There are a number of key parks and leisure sites which would welcome investment for development in the council's portfolio which would significantly add to the cultural and tourism product of Belfast. Café culture in parks is another opportunity the Council would be keen to develop, encouraging people to spend time in parks, improving health and well-being by spending time in attractive, safe, green spaces.

### **2.2.3. Promotion**

Belfast City Council invests nearly £2million per annum into Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau to promote Belfast as a tourism destination. The private / public sector model has proved successful for the city, however there is little reference to BVCB within the Northern Ireland Tourism Strategy or action plan. Furthermore, Belfast City Council has led the development of a new brand for the city. The Northern Ireland Tourism Strategy 2020 must recognise the investment local authorities make in promotion and marketing; acknowledge the existing delivery structures, such as BVCB, and identify their role in supporting or leading on the 'Promotion' actions.

Further consideration needs to be given to the role of the Belfast Brand and how it complements/corresponds with the Northern Ireland Brand.

**Tourism Area Plans should have a promotion and research element.**

**It is important that investment is made in to knowing who our visitors are currently and who they might be in the future. We have had concerns whereby Tourism Ireland have identified key market segments for Ireland which do not match the markets that Belfast is focusing on e.g. younger 18 – 24 year old market is not a priority for Tourism Ireland. Specific research linked to specific themes e.g. city breaks is required to challenge current marketing strategies.**

**2.3 Whether you support the cross cutting theme of Partnership and the associated actions in the Action Plan**

**We support the theme of partnership. No reference is made to the partnership approach that has already been established between NITB and Belfast City Council. This is evident from the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010 – 2014 and from the ten year partnership we have developed through Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau.**

**The Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010 – 2014 is our commitment to developing quality places for residents and visitors. Within the framework we identify 9 Local Tourism Destinations across the city which will be developed to enhance the visitor experience and services. We will be establishing a Belfast champions group to drive the Framework forward and welcome the opportunity to feed directly into the Minister, maximising the buy in from central government.**

**There is no reference to Public/Private sector partnerships within the document. Belfast City Council's experience of such partnerships within the context of tourism has been positive. Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau has already been mentioned above, however it is worth noting that the Titanic Signature Project has been delivered via a public / private sector partnership which has allowed the greatest investment in any single visitor attraction within Northern Ireland. New 'innovative' partnerships will be required to meet the ambitious targets identified.**

**We believe that it is critically important that we deliver quality parks, open spaces and leisure environments that people value and take pride in. We are keen to develop new partnerships which will further enhance the city's assets in terms of programming and provision. For example, sporting facilities**

are a key attractor for the city in terms of regional and international sporting events. New partnerships with the education sector would help deliver a broad range of facilities which would enhance the sports 'offer' in the city.

Equally, initiatives such as the Connswater Greenway and other potential greenway projects in the city have an enormous impact on city and neighbourhood attractiveness. We would encourage the strategy to recognise the importance of such partnership initiatives with the community and voluntary sectors in the city.

- 2.4 Whether you support the proposal to develop an approach for working collaboratively at a local level to deliver for tourism in your area**

Yes, as already demonstrated via the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework.

- 2.5 Whether you feel there are any significant areas not covered by the Strategy or Action Plan and how you wish to see them reflected**

There is limited reference to Northern Ireland's waterways. The Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework has identified the Lagan Canal as a key priority for future development and we see this as being an important step to achieving the broader strategic aim of opening up the Ulster Waterway's network.

Whilst the top line target is to generate £1 billion tourism revenue by 2020, there should be a broader range of measurements to demonstrate/review success.

It may be useful to have a 5 year target to measure performance and review. A job creation target would also be a useful target to have established and may be a useful target to help justify funding support."

Several Members expressed the view that the Belfast Story and the North Foreshore should be included as priorities for action within the Strategy.

Subject to the inclusion of the foregoing comments, the Committee approved the response to the consultation document.

### Culture Night

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of a report in relation to Culture Night 2010 to enable a special meeting to be held to which representatives of the Culture Night organisers would be invited to provide details on how they intended to involve the arterial routes in the event.

### Integrated Cultural Strategy

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### “Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the Development (Arts) Sub-Committee at its meeting on 3 August 2005, approved the creation of a three year Integrated Cultural Strategy for Belfast with partners, including the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI). The strategy set out a framework for 2007- 2010 to help create a joined-up approach to the development of Belfast's cultural sectors.

The strategy focused on:

- strengthening cultural leadership
- profiling Belfast's unique cultural assets
- providing stronger advocacy in support of culture
- encouraging a greater emphasis on social inclusion through audience development
- promoting an investment model of support for the sector to increase income generation and stability.

The strategy is now due for review and there is a need to establish a strong vision, leadership and co-ordination for the forthcoming years. Providing a joined-up approach to the arts will be of paramount importance, given that the Review of Public Administration will change the landscape and culture of public services in Northern Ireland. A key aspect of this process will be to assess Belfast City Council's funding support for the Culture and Arts Sector and to review the current Multi Annual and Annual Funding programmes.

### **Multi Annual and Annual Funding for Culture and Arts**

At the Development Committee meeting of 14 November 2007, Members agreed the selection of 14 Multi-Annual Funding clients. In 2008 two more Multi-Annual Funding clients were selected for a two year funding agreement. Multi-Annual Funding incorporates a three year funding term, and an anticipated minimum annual funding level of £30,000. It was established to introduce a degree of longer term sustainability to some of the city's flagship arts organisations.

### **Key Issues**

Approval is sought from Committee to review the current strategy and to create a new Integrated Cultural Strategy for 2011–2014. The objectives are to:

- Gain active commitment from key stakeholders to work towards a shared vision for the development of the cultural offer in the city and identify how a shared vision can be best achieved within the available structures and resources
- Gain active participation from the sector to deliver Belfast City Council objectives of Leadership, Economy and Quality of Life.
- Establish a collaborative and integrated approach for the development of culture and arts in Belfast
- Determine future priorities and identify opportunities for arts development in Belfast
- Establish and implement a detailed operational plan for the evolution of the culture and arts sector, 2011-2014

The Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit will complete baseline research, coordinate consultation with key stakeholders, agency partners, culture, arts and heritage sectors and community based organisations and facilitate meetings with sectoral groupings. A consultation schedule will allow a co-ordinated approach to gathering input and will seek views on the content of the future plans for culture and arts in Belfast. The Arts Council are carrying out an interim review of their five-year strategy and this can aid analysis of the current cultural offer and impact.

Baseline research and an outline draft strategy with core aim, principles, themes, objectives and key performance indicators will be brought to Committee for consideration in September 2010, as a basis for formal consultation.

### **Multi Annual and Annual Funding for Culture and Arts**

Approval is sought to undertake an external review and evaluation of existing Multi-Annual and Annual Funding clients against agreed funding criteria, the impact of their activity, return on investment and the delivery of the Council's own objectives. The review will include an assessment of each of the Culture and Arts funding streams. It will also:

- Ensure that culture and arts eligibility criteria, approved by Members at the Development (Arts) Sub-Committee of 20 September 2004, reflects the current priorities of Belfast City Council and objectives which will be identified in the 2011-2014 Integrated Cultural Strategy.
- Ensure priorities identified in the Integrated Cultural Strategy for 2011–2014 informs the process and eligibility criteria used to select and assess all culture and arts clients
- Outline the process and inform future consideration of which organisations should continue to receive Multi-Annual Funding, 2011-2014.

The review and draft criteria will be brought to Committee for approval in September 2010 to enable new funding schemes to reopen in October 2010. Recommendations on Multi-Annual Funding clients for 2011-2014, based on organisational capacity and detailed analysis of the organisations strategic direction, will be brought to Committee for consideration in Feb 2011.

### **Resource Implications**

To support the evaluation, consultation, workshops and research required, a budget of £35,000 has been allocated from within the existing Tourism, Culture and Arts Budget in 2010/2011.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee approves the development of a new Integrated Cultural Strategy for Belfast 2011–2014 and a review and assessment of Multi-Annual and Annual Funding. This has been included and approved within the Departmental budget 2010/2011.

### **Decision Tracking**

**Further to ratification payment of no more than £35,000 is made towards the development of an Integrated Cultural Strategy 2011–2014 and Review of the Multi-Annual and Annually Funded Clients 2011-2014.**

**Timeframe: June 2010  
Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney**

### **Key to Abbreviations**

**DCAL – Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure  
ACNI – Arts Council of Northern Ireland”**

In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Economic Initiatives indicated that approximately 50% of the £35,000 budget would be used to employ consultants. The Member expressed the view that there were enough experienced staff within the Department to enable the review to be carried out in-house.

In response, the Director stated that staff in the Department were fully utilised in carrying out reviews, developing projects and undertaking their normal day-to-day work. He pointed out that if the work were to be carried out in-house some of those staff would have to be moved from the projects on which they were currently working which would require those projects to be set aside until work on the Integrated Cultural Strategy was completed. He emphasised also the importance of using external consultants so as to ensure the independence of the Review and any future funding strategy which would be approved subsequently.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Rodgers,  
Seconded by Councillor Kirkpatrick,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the matter to enable a report providing a full breakdown of the costs of the project to be submitted to a future meeting.

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

### **Further Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Ekin,  
Seconded by Councillor C. Maskey,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendations to approve the development of a new Integrated Cultural Strategy for Belfast 2011-2014 and an assessment of Multi-Annual and Annual Funding and the costs associated therewith.

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



### **Belfast City Carnival 2010**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 7th February, 2007, it had agreed to the amalgamation of the Lord Mayor's Show and the Belfast Carnival. That merger had resulted in an annual saving of £28,000 for the Council. Since 2007, the Council had provided £70,000 funding per year to the Beat Initiative towards the delivery of the Lord Mayor's Belfast City Carnival. Whilst the Beat Initiative was the lead partner and had operational responsibility, a Carnival Consortium, which was made up of representatives from community, arts and other festival organisations, had oversight of the Carnival.

The Committee was advised that the Carnival gave due prominence to the Lord Mayor of Belfast as part of the Carnival itself and in all media and related activity. For the 2010 event, the Events Unit would be responsible for a guest stand outside the City Hall and for an appropriate vehicle for the Lord Mayor to travel in. The branding of the event would be "Welcoming the Lord Mayor". The Beat Initiative would ensure that the Carnival adhered to the Council's Good Relations Strategy and, through the Carnival Consortium and the Council's Community Services Unit, would engage community participation and representation from across the City, including extensive involvement from Council-supported community groups. The Beat Initiative would be responsible for the management of the event, including, but not limited to, stewarding and marshalling, insurance, public notification to the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Parades Commission and residents of the route and it would liaise with the Department of the Environment's Road Service and Belfast City Centre Management.

The Carnival involved approximately 1,000 participants with an audience in the region of 30,000. The overall cost of delivering the Carnival was £115,800 and it was estimated that the additional revenue generated for the City would be to the value of £280,000. Accordingly, it was recommended that the Committee agree to provide to the Beat Initiative funding in the sum of £70,000 towards the delivery of the Lord Mayor's Belfast City Carnival 2010.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **Royal Exchange Regeneration Project, Deramore Property Group**

The Committee agreed to receive at a future meeting a presentation from representatives of the Deramore Property Group in relation to the Royal Exchange Regeneration Project.

### **Bank Square Regeneration**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **"Relevant Background Information**

**Members received a presentation from the Forum for Alternative Belfast on 8 February 2010 regarding their proposals for the regeneration of Bank Square Belfast. Members were supportive of the forum's proposals and agreed that a letter be issued to Department for Social Development in this regard.**

Members attended a presentation by RPS, DSD's consultants for the regeneration of Bank Square on 12 February 2010.

Members agreed at the Development Committee of 5 March 2010 to an all-party deputation from the Committee meeting with DSD, Westfield and the Chamber of Trade and Commerce to discuss Bank Square regeneration in the context of the proposals prepared by FAB and RPS. The meeting was held on 19 April 2010.

### Key Issues

DSD's Westside Masterplan identifies the redevelopment of Bank Square as a priority ahead of the redevelopment of the North West Quarter. DSD are planning to make a firm bid for funding for the redevelopment of the square in the next Comprehensive Spending Round. DSD's intention was to have a scheme ready for submission to planning service by 31 March 2010 but have delayed their final steering group meeting and submission until Westfield's commitment to the FAB's proposal was ascertained and agreement with BCC on their design proposals.

Key to FAB's proposals for Bank Square was development on land owned by Westfield. At the meeting on 19 April 2010 both DSD and Westfield advised that they had met on 8 April 2010. Their agreed position was that it was not currently feasible to include Westfield's land in the regeneration of Bank Square.

DSD advised that when the redevelopment of CastleCourt takes place the entire service yard may be relocated but that there was no possibility currently of any alterations to the yard.

Westfield confirmed that due to fuel tanks located underground in the service yard there was very little room for manoeuvre for development in or around the existing yard. There are on average 150 vehicle movements a day in the yard. Westfield had considered FAB's proposals for retail units around the periphery of the service yard. Westfield confirmed that they did not consider that there would be successful commercial enterprises.

Westfield also confirmed that they would not be gifting any land to the city for the regeneration of the square.

Responding to Members' questions DSD confirmed that their proposals for upgrade of the square would require expenditure of £4-5 million and provide significant improvement to the area they are committed to working with BCC on their proposals to ensure that there is an agreed plan submitted to planning service. Confirmation was given by DSD that there was no halfway house between the FAB proposal and RPS proposal.

Westfield confirmed that they would work with DSD on the treatment to the perimeter wall of the service yard and in particular to the development of a living wall to improve the environment and aesthetic quality of this boundary to the Square.

The reopening of Berry Street was not currently possible on the grounds of health and safety.

DSD were also asked by Members that the future and management use of the Square would be on a shared space basis and fully inclusive to all communities.

Given that the proposals put forward by FAB are not considered feasible by Westfield or DSD at this time, Members are requested to support DSD's original proposals as in Appendix 1.

#### Resource Implications

There are no major resource implications regarding this report.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to support DSD's proposals for the regeneration of Bank Square.

#### Decision Tracking

Subject to Committee agreement DSD are advised of Belfast City Council's support for their regeneration proposals for Bank Square.

Timeline: May 2010

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

#### Key to Abbreviations

DSD – Department for Social Development

BCC – Belfast City Council

FAB – Forum for Alternative Belfast"

The Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed that representatives of RPS be requested to meet with the existing users of the Square to outline its Plans.

### Markets Update

#### Unit Lettings at Smithfield Market

In accordance with the authority delegated to him, the Director reported that the following units at Smithfield Market had been let:

- Unit 15 – James Gilliland, 19 Oranmore Drive, Belfast, at a cost of £520 per month for the purposes of the retailing of antique and collectable toys. The trader had previously been operating in Unit 22; and
- Unit 22 – David Montgomery, 8 Brooklans Gardens, Whitehead, at a cost of £180 per month for the purposes of the retailing of confectionary.

Noted.

#### Mobile Wash Hand Facility

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 14th April, it had agreed to 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 of the Committee.

The Committee was advised that that minute had been taken back to the Committee for further consideration by the Council at its meeting on 4th May but had been affirmed earlier in the meeting.

The Director reported that it was proposed to purchase 40 mobile sinks at a cost of £650 per unit, which would result in an initial outlay of £26,000. The rent per unit to the trader would be £5.00 each trading day and this fee would include electricity charges. If all 40 mobile sinks were rented out each Market Day, the Council would recoup the initial expenditure within eighteen months. However it was anticipated that the initial outlay would be recouped within two years.

Noted.

#### Donegall Pass Community Centre

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### “Relevant Background Information

**Donegall Pass Community Centre is situated on Apsley Street in the Donegall Pass area of the city. The centre was constructed in 2001 in direct response to community need in the area and has provided much needed services and facility access to the entire community since then.**

BCC support for the centre construction was approved by the Community & Leisure Sub-Committee at its meeting on 12 March 1996. Members agreed that the Council would part fund the construction together with some associated running costs. The total capital cost being £244,500: 75% of which was grant aided by 'Making Belfast Work.'

Under the original terms of its development the responsibility of managing the centre was undertaken by BCC, however this was viewed as a short-term measure with the ultimate aim of transferring this management to the community. Therefore the meeting of the Sub-Committee in August 2000 agreed that provision be made within the revenue estimates to enable the centre to operate as a full time directly managed facility for a period of two years with a view to building local capacity to adopt the local community management model at the end of an agreed period. This arrangement was further extended at the meeting of the Sub-Committee of 7 January 2003 and again in 2007 on the basis that both the local community and BCC officers felt the capacity had not been adequately developed to support local independent management arrangements.

Donegall Pass Community Forum have developed a master plan for the Donegall Pass area. The Community Centre is considered to be a vital part of the Donegall Pass master plan which will enable the strengthening of community infrastructure and facilities.

Within this context officers have met with representatives of the Donegall Pass Community Forum in order to assess the potential of the Forum to assume management responsibilities for the Centre. The Development Committee of 10 June 2009 agreed to support a full economic business plan which included detailed stakeholder consultation, extensive desktop research and benchmarking analysis. The study considered a range of options for the management of the centre, considered associated risk and made have recommendation. The report, which was completed by Copius Consulting, has been circulated for the information of the Members.

### Key Issues

The Community Centre represents a significant financial investment by the Council in an area of social need.

The Donegall Pass Community Forum (DPFC), as the lead community organisation for the inner city urban village that is Donegall Pass, has local community support and is either involved in or is delivering a range of services/projects of benefit to local people.

While the DPCF recognises the value in community management of the centre, they are mindful of undertaking this function in the current economic downturn and more importantly the uncertainty of a diminishing funding environment. The Forum has also taken account of the comments from elected representatives relating to their experience in facility management.

The feasibility report was presented to the Donegall Pass Community Centre Committee on 20 January 2010. It has also been subject to discussion at the DPFC meeting on 11 February 2010. The outcome being a unanimous decision in support of recommendation one of the feasibility report :

‘The Donegall Pass Community Forum should seek to explore the possibility with Belfast City Council of conducting a period of transition which would allow it to fully examine the practicalities of assuming the management of the Centre. This would allow the group to fully examine all aspects of management as well as build further its capacity to undertake the management successfully. This recommendation would see the Forum undertake the management of the Centre after a period of one year with agreement of all parties’.

The DPCF have agreed on the membership of a sub-committee to take the initiative forward if agreed by Council.

#### Resource Implications

There is no resource implications connected to this request in 2010/11.

#### Recommendations

Donegall Pass Community Forum has notified Council that recommendation 1 of the feasibility study (to undertake management of the Donegall Pass Community Centre) is their preferred option.

The Committee is requested to consider the content of the report and the DPCF position and to:

1. Agree the request of a ‘transition period’ of one year which would involve members of the DPCF ‘shadowing’ Council staff with management responsibility at the Community Centre. This transition period of one year would allow the DPCF to carry out a number of exercises /activities that would allow it to fully assess the practicalities of undertaking the management of the Centre with the ultimate aim of progressing with the management transfer post the period.

2. To further agree that, at the end of this transition year, the Forum and council officers would undertake a robust assessment of the position and the capacity of the organisation to undertake community management of Donegall Pass Community Centre.

### **Decision Tracking**

Further to approval and ratification that the recommendations be implemented.

Time line: June 2010      Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart

### **Key Abbreviations**

**DPCF – Donegall Pass Community Forum”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Belfast Tourism Monitor 2009**

The Committee agreed to receive at its next monthly meeting a presentation on the findings of the 2009 Belfast Tourism Monitor. In addition, the Committee agreed that expenditure not exceeding £4,000 be incurred in connection with the production of a Tourism Facts and Figures Booklet.

### **Pride of Place Cities Competition 2010**

The Committee was advised that the Pride of Place Competition provided Community Groups from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland with an opportunity to showcase initiatives which would have a lasting and positive impact upon their communities. Since 2004, the Council had sponsored, with considerable success, the participation of several groups in the Competition. The 2010 Pride of Place Cities Competition allowed a maximum of six entries per Council, subject to defined categories and rules. The following four groups had been identified as suitable for entry in this year's Competition:

- Hannahstown Community Association in the Population Category – which was the only rural community within Belfast - which ran a community facility in the West of the City;
- Forum for Action on Substance Abuse, which worked across Belfast with those who were affected by drugs, alcohol and other substances;
- Artability in the Theme Category – the group provided art, music and drama workshops which highlighted the issues of disability and cultural awareness at a community level in order to promote integration, equality and cultural diversity; and

- Taughmonagh Community Forum in the Non-population Housing Estate Category – the Forum helped coordinate community programmes and projects within its area in the South of the City.

The cost per entry was £500 and this year's awards ceremony would be held in the Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim, Co. Meath on 13th and 14th November.

The Committee approved the entry of the four groups as outlined and approved also the attendance of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the Director of Development (or their nominees), together with a maximum of three persons per external project (up to a maximum of twelve in total) at the 2010 Awards Ceremony and authorised the payment of the entrants' fees, travelling, attendance and subsistence allowances in connection therewith.

### **Research on Flow of Capital in Belfast**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**Members will be aware from the Departmental plan 2008/09 that a research was commissioned to update the Belfast City Region Report, 2004 and assess the importance of Belfast as a regional economic driver. Oxford Economics were appointed and they submitted a final report in November 2009.**

**The research focussed on:**

- **Monitoring the flow of people, skills, spending and investment into and out of the Belfast economy;**
- **Providing a better understanding of Belfast's economic specialisations and inter-linkages with the rest of NI;**
- **Articulating Belfast's contribution to economic elements of the Programme for Government (PfG);**
- **Exploring the risks and opportunities facing the Belfast economy; and**
- **Providing commentary on the urban policy environment in NI and the UK.**

**Appendix 1 contains an executive summary of this research. If they wish, Members can obtain a full version of this document.**

**The research is quite comprehensive but some of the key findings highlighting the key importance of Belfast as the engine room of the regional economy are:**



- Major employer of persons living in and outside the city. There are currently an estimated 108,000 people who work in Belfast but live outside Belfast (in-commuters). This represents approximately 55 per cent of the estimated total number of persons employed in the Belfast economy.
- Belfast is a 'regional economic driver' to an even greater extent than Edinburgh and Glasgow combined in Scotland or Manchester and Liverpool combined in the north west of England.
- A magnet for service sector foreign direct investment (FDI)
  - Belfast attracts the majority of service sector FDI in NI.
- Home to two-thirds of NI's largest 50 companies and one-half of foreign-owned businesses.
- A transport hub for the region.
- Service exporter - while Belfast 'imports' food products, construction services and manufactured goods from elsewhere in NI (and outside), in return it 'exports' many of its services to the rest of NI (especially where the same level or quality of services are not available locally) and outside NI.
- A provider of further and higher education and specialist health services.
- Gateway for tourists and a provider of unique retail, cultural, entertainment and visitor opportunities which are not available elsewhere in the region.

### Key Issues

This report will support the Council's commitment to evidence based decision making. It provides strong evidence showing the key role of cities in the economy and specifically Belfast as a driver of the NI regional economy. It emphasizes the need for a key urban policy focus in Northern Ireland.

The report will be used in the following ways:

- To provide statistical evidence for Members and Council staff to describe Belfast's role as a regional economic driver;
- To provide additional research evidence supporting the role of cities in the economy and specifically Belfast as a driver of the NI regional economy;
- To support Council's responses to various consultations on policies like the new Regional Development Strategy (DRD);
- To provide evidence for funding applications; and
- To provide information for the new Corporate Plan 2011/12 and beyond.

### Recommendations

The Committee members are asked to:  
Note the content of this report

### Decision Tracking

There is no decision tracking attached to this report as the contents are for notation only

### Documents Attached

Appendix 1: Summary report of Flow of Capital, Oxford Economics.

### Appendix 1

### Belfast City Council Belfast flow of people, skills, spending and investment Report, Autumn 2009

### Executive summary

Oxford Economics were commissioned by Belfast City Council in December 2008 to update analysis on Belfast's 'place' in the NI economy, with, compared to their previous Belfast – Regional Driver (2004) research, additional focus on the following areas:

- The flow of people, skills, spending and investment into and out of the Belfast economy;
- Improving understanding of Belfast's economic specialisations and inter-linkages with the rest of the NI economy;
- Articulating Belfast's significant contribution to economic elements of the Programme for
- Government and its potential economic role in light of the recently published Independent Review of Economic Policy; and
- Exploring the risks and opportunities facing the Belfast economy (and running upside and downside scenarios through Oxford Economics' local forecasting model - the same local economic forecasting model used by DRD to feed into the review of the Regional Development Strategy).

This executive summary provides an overview of the main report findings and highlights at the end key policy remarks which are discussed in more depth in the main report.

**What Belfast does for the NI economy ...**

- **Major employer of persons living in and outside the city. There are currently an estimated 108,000 people who work in Belfast but live outside Belfast (in-commuters), up from 96,000 in the 2001 Census year. This represents approximately 55 per cent of the estimated total number of persons employed in the Belfast economy.**
- **A service centre for the whole NI economy - one-third of all NI service sector jobs are located in Belfast.**
- **Belfast has half of NI's hi-tech manufacturing jobs, 3 in 5 computer and related service jobs and two-thirds of creative media and arts jobs.**
- **Belfast is a 'regional economic driver' to an even greater extent than Edinburgh and Glasgow combined in Scotland or Manchester and Liverpool combined in the north west of England.**
- **A magnet for service sector foreign direct investment (FDI) - Belfast attracts the majority of service sector FDI in NI (two-thirds based on Invest NI figures for planned investment by and assistance to foreign-owned client companies). Though with the exception of FDI in the transport equipment/aerospace sector, Belfast attracts a very small share of inward manufacturing FDI.**
- **Home to two-thirds of NI's largest 50 companies and one-half of foreign-owned businesses.**
- **A transport hub for the region.**
- **Service exporter - while Belfast 'imports' food products, construction services and manufactured goods from elsewhere in NI (and outside), in return it 'exports' many of its services to the rest of NI (especially where the same level or quality of services are not available locally) and outside NI.**
- **Three-quarters of service exports originated from Belfast in 2006 (the latest year this date is available). Without Belfast's offerings in certain activities (e.g. TV, software, insurance, legal services), other parts of NI would have to import from outside the region. In other words Belfast's economic role is not 'zero-sum' – the regional economy benefits from economic activity in and from Belfast.**

- A provider of further and higher education and specialist health services.
- Gateway for tourists.
- Provider of unique retail, cultural, entertainment and visitor opportunities which are not available elsewhere in the region.

**Belfast's contribution to achieving Public Service Agreements (PSAs)**

- Belfast's exporting service sector and role as a 'magnet' for high-paid (often more labour intensive) service sector inward investment are important contributors to PSA 1 and PSA 3. Also given that private sector productivity in the Belfast economy (workplace GVA divided by workplace employment) is one-third above the NI average (and consequently well above the UK excluding Greater South East average which NI aspires to half the gap with), the entire Belfast private sector is an important contributor to PSA 1.
- Important contributor to research and development (R&D), skills, knowledge-transfer and tourism for which there are targets across different PSAs.
- From a more negative perspective Belfast contributes disproportionately to the number of people living regionally in disadvantaged areas (PSA 12). However, delivering economic growth in Belfast, which will be necessary to help to improve economic outcomes for persons living in some of Belfast's most disadvantaged wards (and thereby close employment differentials), will also benefit all residents and commuters.
- While other sub-regions matter for achievement of PSAs, the research shows that Belfast, given its size and favourable economic structure for tomorrow's economy, will become increasingly important.

**Flow of people, skills, spending and investment**

Selected findings from the flows analysis is highlighted below:

- People: The level of in-commuting to Belfast in 2001 was 96,000 (of which 80,000 travelled by car or car pool). In-commuting is estimated to have grown by approximately 15 per cent since then, with higher levels

of in-commuting expected in future. In addition to this are daily flows of roughly 12,000 post-primary pupils resident outside Belfast and almost 130,000 annual hospital admissions by non-Belfast residents, not to mention inflows of shoppers, evening economy customers and domestic and international tourists. All of these flows together add to the infrastructure pressures on the city, as well as of course bringing significant economic benefits.

- **Skills:** Despite the presence of higher and further education institutions, the Belfast workplace economy is heavily dependent on commuter skills, particularly at the higher end of the skills and occupation spectrum. In the 2001 Census year, 33 per cent (one-third) of in-commuters' highest qualification was graduate level (NVQ 4/5), compared to 15 per cent for persons with no qualifications.
- **Spending:** The Belfast economy is estimated to procure goods and services worth approximately £5.1bn from other NI councils, sustaining up to 32,000 jobs [note these figures in particular should always be appropriately caveated – see the main report (section 5.2) for reasons why]. As well as providing jobs for over 100,000 persons living outside Belfast, spending by in-commuters, net of spending in the Belfast economy, is estimated to sustain a further 18,000 induced jobs in other NI councils. Other major spending flows quantified / presented in the main report include evening economy and visitor spending.
- **Investment:** Despite fears of off-shoring and out-sourcing in industry and elements of services (e.g. call centres), on a net basis Belfast still attracts more inward FDI projects than the number of outward projects (according to data from OCO Consulting). The majority of inward FDI projects to Belfast are from US companies, followed by ROI and Indian companies. The most common activities are design, development and testing; retail; sales, marketing and support; business services; R&D and manufacturing. From a productivity / 'moving up the value added chain' perspective, it is positive that several of these activities are high-end.

### Belfast's future

- **Baseline outlook:** In the short-term an abrupt end in Belfast's 'golden era' is predicted with almost 10,000 net job losses between 2008 and 2010 – equivalent to the gains achieved over the longer 4-year period 2004-2008. During the recession, the number of non-employed working age residents is predicted to rise by almost 6,000 and net commuting is projected to fall (as there are fewer jobs to commute to). Looking to the longer-term, the picture is somewhat more positive. Belfast, and urban economies generally, should return to enjoy growth as demand for 'graduatehungry' tradable service workers continues to grow and the national economy rebalances from domestic-led to external export-led growth. Belfast's contribution to total NI net employment growth is forecast to increase from 23 per cent between 1998 and 2008 to 27 per cent in the long-term (2010-2030), although this is not sufficiently strong, and commuters are still assumed to take a high proportion of jobs, to bring Belfast's resident unemployment level back down to its recent low.

The report also provided commentary on a range of upside and downside risks which need to be considered alongside the baseline outlook. These are 'fleshed' out in more detail in chapter 6.

### Policy remarks

This research has built up a strong evidence base to justify the importance of cities and specifically Belfast as the driver of the NI economy. As such we (and cities in the rest of the UK alongside bodies such as the Centre for Cities) argue that cities require a clearly identified space in the policy framework to ensure they are correctly supported and fostered as engines of economic growth. Presently this clarity on urban policy is much more progressed in England than in NI where no explicit urban policy exists. (Chapter 2 in the report is dedicated to exploring the urban policy context in NI and making comparisons with other jurisdictions which are 'ahead of the game' compared to NI).

Greater powers are being devolved and more responsibilities are being transferred in other city locations compared to NI, even after accounting for some degree of decentralisation under RPA. The rationale for this shift, which should apply to NI, is that it is a more effective way of developing appropriate policies given the dynamism inherent in cities.

Powers are however being shifted to 'city regions' and not tightly defined city boundary areas (like Belfast City Council). Collaboration is therefore important to ensure policymaking can be effective. We note that the local government element of RPA did not create a Belfast metropolitan 'super council' encompassing Belfast and the other five current councils which make up the current BMA. This would have mapped a new 'super council' against BMAP.

These issues, in our opinion at least, have set a clear direction of where NI policy should go – namely create an urban policy (which ideally could sit alongside rural policy) and devolve greater powers to 'city region' decision-making institutions including new 'super' councils. Of course the details of how, when and if is another matter, especially as 'super councils' will first need time to adjust to their new post-RPA structures and powers. However with the right processes put in place, there is no reason why, with a devolved Assembly, the necessary decisions cannot be taken."

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

#### **Outputs from South by Southwest and Nashville**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **"Relevant Background Information**

##### **1. South by Southwest (SXSW)**

Members will be aware that, at the Development Committee of 14 May 2008, approval was received to support Council participation at the South by Southwest (SXSW) Media Conference and Festival for 2009 and 2010.

SXSW is the premier global event focusing on the creative side of the music and entertainment business. It is held in Austin, Texas on an annual basis and this year's event took place on 17-21 March 2010.

The aim of attending SXSW was, under Belfast City Council's support for the creative industries, to promote Belfast musicians and music-related businesses to an international audience and showcasing the investment and purchasing opportunities offered by Belfast's music industry.

## **2. Nashville**

Members will be aware that at a meeting of the Development Committee on 16 September 2009 approval was given for an outward Civic Visit to Nashville in March 2010.

Members will also be aware that new partnerships have been formed to deliver the Belfast Nashville 2010 Action Plan, which has been greatly expanded to include not only culture and tourism, but education, economic development, genealogy, literary tourism, music tourism, international exhibitions, international marketing, creative industries, film and digital media and communications. Group membership has been expanded to reflect the new plan and now includes formal partnerships with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Queen's University. The group meets on a bi-monthly basis in order to achieve economic benefits from the Sister City relationship.

The purpose of the visit was to:

- Agree the new action plan for 2010 identifying areas of economic development, cultural and tourism links in order to developing and implementing the Sister City Link
- Strengthen and enhance the partnership between the two cities and cement the relationship with the Nashville Mayor's Office and Sister Cities Team
- Utilise the Sister City Linkage to profile Belfast as a cultural tourism destination in the Southern States and increase tourism revenue from this market
- Co-ordinate and support the activities taking place between both cities and better maximise our relationship with Nashville

The Belfast City Council delegation was accompanied (at their own expense) by Tourism Ireland, Belfast Nashville Songwriters' Festival, Filmtrip and, through support from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, five singer-songwriters. BBC Radio Ulster's Ralph McLean also attended in order to present and record music showcases and produce programmes on the Sister City Relationship.

### **Key Issues**

#### **1. South by Southwest (SXSW)**

Belfast City Council coordinated and managed the Belfast participation at and input into this year's event. In the absence of the Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission (NIMIC) which was disbanded earlier in the year, officers worked with partners in Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and Arts Council NI (ACNI) to offer twenty Belfast-based businesses the opportunity to take part in SXSW.



The Council's investment of £40,000 was used towards hire of the exhibition stand, showcase venue, marketing and promotional material and support for the selected musicians. We were also able to attract additional finance from ACNI and DCAL. ACNI contributed £32,500 through its Creative Industries Innovation Fund (CIIF) to allow 10 businesses to attend and to cover the costs of a business to business networking event while DCAL provided £13,700 to allow a further 10 businesses be in attendance.

The scale of the participation allowed Belfast to make a greater impact at this year's event. We secured the opening showcase event of the conference programme and received significant publicity and PR coverage around this and the other events that were organised.

The investment levered the following outcomes:

- 20 Belfast based companies participated in the event
- 4 bands and 4 musicians performed at the two Belfast Showcases
- 2 Showcase and networking events were organised, attracting over 2000 international business delegates
- A total of \$269,000 of potential new contracts have been secured to date
- Private sector leverage of at least £20,000 from participating private sector businesses (average £1000 per company)
- 3000 Belfast Music CDs were produced and promoted at the event
- Presence on the exhibition stand in conference centre with over 6,500 in attendance
- Belfast Music CD campaign running across the US for 6 weeks with 40 stations signed up to put the compilation onto their playlists
- Press and PR coverage secured on Culture Northern Ireland, Arts Extra, UTV Live Tonight, BBC Northern Ireland, Frantixmag, Los Angeles Times, Austin Chronicle, BBC Across the Line.

The business outcomes for participating companies are constantly being updated as contracts are agreed. It is anticipated that the figure quoted will increase significantly in the coming months.

In addition to the business side of the conference, meetings were organised with the City of Austin's business development agencies with responsibility for the promotion of the creative industries. It is intended that the relationships established may allow us to develop joint projects for business to business development between small creative businesses in Austin and Belfast as well as opportunities for partnership working at future SXSW events.

A feedback report detailing company feedback is attached in Appendix 1 and a full report on participants, event attendees and press coverage is available for Members' information.

Subsequent to the event, there has been contact from both DCAL and Invest NI to consider how we might organise participation at the event next year. It is anticipated that the collaborative approach that has been developed over the last two years should be expanded to include additional companies and opportunities for showcasing.

#### Resource Implications

Belfast City Council contributed £40,000 of a total £86,200 public funding towards the 2010 event. Based on an initially positive list of outcomes from the event, it is recommended that up to a maximum of £40,000 be made available from the 2011 Economic Development budget towards the Belfast participation at the 2011 event. This contribution will be subject to additional funding being made available from other public and private sector partners.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to the allocation of up to £40,000 towards participation in the 2011 South by South West event, subject to additional funding being made available from other public and private sector partners.

#### Decision Tracking

Subject to approval of the recommendation, a report will be brought back to committee to update on progress in recruiting participants and attracting additional funding.

Timeframe: December 2010 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

#### 2. Nashville

The Belfast Nashville Sister City Relationship has been greatly strengthened by the visit and tangible outputs were achieved. Highlights include:

#### New Partnerships:

#### Mayor's Office of Economic Development and the Nashville Healthcare Council

Since Nashville is the capital of the US health care industry and Belfast is the core of a European Connected Health Network, a new partnership has been established to work collaboratively. An invitation has been issued to the Nashville Healthcare Council to participate in the European Connected Health network Summit in June 2010 in order to establish linkages.

### Nashville Music Council and Chamber of Commerce

This was established by the Mayor's Office in order to spearhead economic development efforts that capitalise on Nashville's identity as Music City. They have agreed to develop a stronger relationship with Belfast in relation to music development, joint showcasing, exchange models of best practice in order to generate economic return for both cities.

### Nashville Visitor and Convention Bureau (NVCB)

The NVCB received a presentation from Belfast City Council and have agreed to work in partnership with the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB) in order to maximise the international promotion of both cities. They provided marketing, print, distribution and online marketing support for the delegation visit and music showcases and shared best practice on the creation of a music city. An outward visit from BVCB in Autumn 2010 will result in further collaborations.

### Nashville Symphony Hall

Following the visit, there is an opportunity to strengthen ties and increase performances in both cities. Belfast's Barry Douglas and Camerata Ireland will perform at the symphony in March 2011.

Nashville Arts and Business Council will partner with Arts and Business Northern Ireland in order to share best practice.

### Tourism

BCC worked in partnership with Tourism Ireland to utilize the Sister City Linkage to profile Belfast as a cultural tourism destination in the Southern States and increase tourism revenue from this market. Tourism Ireland worked with their offices across the United States to highlight the music showcase events and promoted the event to travel and music journalists. They marketed Belfast City Council's new music products including belfastmusic.org to promote Belfast as a vibrant European destination and the gateway to Ireland and Europe.

- PR and media coverage in the States to send out a positive message of Belfast - TV, radio, web, Tennessee news press, specialist trade music magazines, specialist travel press.
- Belfast received over \$55,000 equivalent in advertising of print media coverage.
- Targeted marketing to the Scots-Irish community in the Southern States to increase cultural tourism visitors.
- 1000 Northern Ireland CDs distributed

### Genealogy

Belfast City Council partnered with the Ulster Scots Community Network and Tourism Ireland to create the exhibition Ulster and Tennessee, the Ulster-Scots contribution to the making of the United States. The exhibition was launched at the Andrew Jackson Homestead, the Hermitage, on the anniversary of Jackson's birthday. The ceremony was attended by over 150 people, Tennessee media, and a descendent of Andrew Jackson. The exhibition is now available as a permanent resource in Nashville and 5000 booklets have been distributed.

Belfast City Council partnered with the Ulster Historical Foundation to create the Belfast Nashville Historical and Genealogical Connections Booklet and Guide to researching family and history in Belfast. This was in order to profile cultural and historical links between the two cities and target the Scots-Irish community in the Southern States as potential holiday visitors. It was launched at the Andrew Jackson Hermitage, 5000 booklets have been distributed and it is now available as an online resource through Sister Cities. An exhibition charting the role of Scots-Irish influence in education, religion, politics and culture, such as Andrew Jackson, Woodrow Wilson, John Steinbeck, Mark Twain and Neil Armstrong.

### Music

Delivered by the Belfast Nashville Songwriters' Festival and supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, four musicians Iain Archer, Ricky Warwick, Aaron Shanley and Gareth Dunlop, performed three showcases with high profile singer-songwriters from Nashville. It was a unique opportunity to launch Belfast's Music Tourism initiatives internationally. The showcases culminated in a high profile public concert with Nashville and Belfast musicians on Saturday 13 March and this will be broadcast on BBC Radio Ulster later this year. Six professional award-winning songwriters from Nashville waived their fees of £12,000 in order to perform. It was hosted by Ralph McLean from BBC Northern Ireland and a live recording was broadcast on BBC Radio Ulster. The showcases were attended by Nashville's music industry professionals including publishers, record companies and agents. It was also supported by Mayor Dean, the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Sister City Representatives and music journalists.

**Belfast Nashville Songwriters' Festival Showcases improved the business networks and partnerships between Belfast and Nashville by showcasing Belfast's music talent in the international marketplace. They:**

- **Provided networking opportunities for those working in Belfast's music sector and potential buyers and distributors by inviting key figures from the music industry**
- **Increased the number of Belfast musicians doing business internationally by identification of potential new investment and partnerships**
- **Raised the profile of the Sister City Relationship in Belfast**
- **Promoted the 2011 Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival and Belfast Songwriting Convention to new artists music industry figures.**
- **Increased knowledge and understanding of the opportunities available in Nashville for musicians by face-to-face meetings and distributing information**
- **Were influential in securing sponsorship support from leading songwriter organisations for 2010.**

**Outputs include:**

- **Gareth Dunlop is in negotiations with a leading Nashville publisher following the Bluebird Showcase and has been invited back to Nashville in June 2010.**
- **Aaron Shanley is also negotiating with a leading Nashville publisher and with a large American corporation on a Europe-wide sponsorship deal following the Dan McGuinness showcase.**
- **Both Iain Archer and Ricky Warwick have co-written with several leading writers in Nashville and the songs are being published in UK & USA**
- **A two-hour Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival Showcase was recorded for radio by The Music Row Show then broadcast to 29 States and on the internet. Recorded by WLAC at the Clear Channel Building, Nashville.**
- **Showcase performances and interviews will be broadcast on BBC NI television as part of two documentaries on Ian Brick and Ricky Warwick.**

### Education

Members will be aware that a formal relationship has been established between Queen's University and Vanderbilt University which has resulted in international research collaborations, student and lecturer exchanges and facilitated connections between schools, departments, and offices to promote internationalisation. Key individuals from the Vanderbilt Office attended Belfast City Council events and the Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival showcases. The Vice-Chancellor and a delegation from Queen's University will visit Nashville in May 2010.

### Resource Implications

£50,000 which has been provided within the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit budget for implementation of the 2010 /11 action plan.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Notes the contents of this report
2. Commits to developing the Nashville Sister City relationship and 2010/11 Action Plan and its implementation within budget.
3. Approves an inward Civic Visit from Mayor Dean in 2010 (no additional financial commitment is required from Committee)

### Decision Tracking

Further to approval, an update report in relation to planning and preparation will be brought to Committee.

Timeframe: September 2010 Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney

### Key to Abbreviations

SXSW – South by South West  
DCAL – Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure  
ACNI – Arts Council for Northern Ireland  
CIIF – Creative Industries Innovation Fund  
NVCB - Nashville Visitor and Convention Bureau”

After discussion, the Committee:

- (i) agreed to allocate up to a maximum of £40,000 towards participation in the 2011 South by South West event, subject to additional funding being made available from other public and private sector partners;
- (ii) agreed to the development of the Nashville Sister City relationship and the 2010/11 Action Plan and to its implementation within budget; and
- (iii) approved an inward Civic Visit from Mayor Dean in 2010.

### **Visit of the Boston Bruins Ice Hockey Team**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

In the last ten years, Belfast has built a strong reputation for hosting major events. Prior to 1999, the visit of the Tall Ships was perhaps the one stand out major event to be hosted by the City. However, with the changes in the political climate, the City has had a renaissance in major event management. It began with the World Cross Country Championships in 1999 and gradually bids for major events became more ambitious. The next eight years saw Belfast host many significant major events such as the World Irish Dancing Championships, the World Amateur Boxing Championships, the U19 European football Championships, the Special Olympics Ireland Games, and the U-19 Rugby World Cup and the return of the Tall Ships in 2009 – arguably the largest ever event on the island, with an estimated economic impact of £16m to the City.

An approach has now been made by the Belfast Giants, with the support of other influential stakeholders, to seek funding support from Belfast City Council to bring the Boston Bruins Ice Hockey team to Belfast to play an exhibition match on Saturday 2nd October 2010, as part of a longer term plan to bring National Hockey League games to Belfast, especially during 2012.

#### **The Boston Bruins**

Considered to be the equivalent to the Manchester United of hockey, the Bruins play in the National Hockey League (NHL) in the United States. Over the last 5 years, the NHL has sent teams to start the competitive season in Europe, to raise the profile of the league and allow the European fans to see their favourite players.

The Management of the Belfast Giants, have used their NHL contacts to secure the opportunity of a pre-season stopover in Belfast. The event will draw supporters from both the US and UK market. The longer term aim is to encourage the NHL to consider Belfast for future competitive games, at no cost to the City, potentially beginning during the 2012 Titanic celebrations.

While the hockey match will be the main event, it will also be the catalyst for other activities. Further information on the exhibition match, and other activities associated with the weekend of the main event, can be found in Appendix 1, under 'The Project', which has been circulated for the information of the Members.

In summary, the core benefits of supporting the visit of the Belfast Bruins to Belfast in October would be to:

- Significant return on investment in the form of economic impact for the region. It is estimated that 4,500 visitors will visit Belfast from both the UK and USA. The estimated economic return on this is £870,000 with an estimated 18,000 bednights based on evidence from the organisers.
- Further develop sporting, tourism and trade links with the Boston area. It is anticipated that Invest NI will co-ordinate a trade visit to coincide with this significant sporting occasion. Delegates will be key business leaders from San Jose, Boston and New York. In addition, a group of prominent US political figures have agreed to visit Belfast.
- In partnership with the NITB, raise the profile of the region through major sports events within the media and visitor economy, particularly to the North American market.
- Increase the profile of Belfast as a first class venue for international sporting events.
- Assist with the longer term goal of hosting an NHL game in 2012 as part of a wider European league.
- The continued development of a sport which has already been positive for the City.
- To develop the expertise and capacity required to host major international and world class events in Belfast, particularly with the World Police and Firefighter Games in mind.
- The event will also attract significant television coverage locally and internationally.



### Key Issues

The attached business case provides details on the sporting event, the wide range of potential benefits and expected media coverage of the event. This information has been provided by the Belfast Giants.

The weekend event, with a high profile hockey match at the core, will undoubtedly bring significant benefits to the City in terms of tourism, economic impact, and developing future relations, particularly in North America. The local organisers are confident that the event is financially feasible and could have returns in future years.

### Resource Implications

The expenditure for the sports event and associated activities currently stands at £686,000. Projected ticket and merchandising income being in the region of £400,000. These figures have been determined based on previous similar events.

The remaining deficit of approximately £286,000 would be met by a cocktail of public and private sector funding. The Belfast Giants have not secured other private sector sponsors as yet, but with over £200k being secured during the last year; at least £50,000 private sponsorship is expected for such a prestigious event. It is anticipated that the hire charge for the Odyssey Arena (approximately £25k) will be waived or significantly reduced.

A request for £100,000 has been made to The Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Invest NI is committed to between £35-50,000.

Therefore, Belfast City Council has been approached to underwrite the remaining deficit of £50,000. However, a maximum figure of £40,000 is currently available within existing budgets, which has been allocated for bidding for major events.

Belfast City Council has benefited from such an arrangement in the past. For example, the Council had underwritten the Masters Tennis event at the Odyssey to £10,000. However, ticket revenue negated the need for this funding and the Council's contribution was zero, although benefiting from promotional materials.

### Recommendations

The Committee is asked to approve funding of a maximum of £40k towards the hosting of the Boston Bruins in October 2010.

### **Decision Tracking**

**Officers will monitor funding and evaluate outcomes post-project delivery. These outcomes will be presented to Members as part of the City Events Unit key performance indicators.”**

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor C. Maskey,  
Seconded by Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín,

That the Committee agrees to provide funding up to a maximum of £40,000 towards the hosting of the Boston Bruins in October, 2010.

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

### **Sister City Link – Hefei, China**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**Members will be aware that, over the last decade, the cities of Belfast and Hefei have been developing linkages. These culminated in the signature of a Sister Cities relationship between the two cities in 2005. A number of visits and exchanges between the cities have taken place and new relationships continue to develop.**

#### **Key Issues**

**An action plan for the development of linkages between the cities was approved by the Committee in September 2008. This included a range of actions under the following headings:**

- **Business Development and Investment**
- **Education and training**
- **Enhancing links with the Chinese community in Belfast**
- **Cultural awareness**
- **Information and awareness-raising**

**At a previous meeting of Development Committee (13 August 2008), a presentation was made by Amnesty International regarding the linkages with Hefei. Following that presentation, the Committee agreed to Amnesty’s proposal that, in its future links with Hefei, the city should:**

- Promote the integration of human rights dialogue and education into the Council's relationship with Hefei
- Put human rights on the agenda during all future meetings with the Hefei civic leadership
- Raise human rights issues with all official visitors from Hefei to Belfast and
- Ensure that Council representatives raise human rights concerns during all official visits to Hefei.

Since the endorsement of this proposal, there have been no civic exchanges between the cities. However, a range of other linkages and activities with China and the Chinese community in Belfast has been undertaken including:

#### Business Development and Investment

- Completion of a business development initiative to help local small businesses consider 'Doing Business in China'. 10 companies took part; 7 of whom are currently pursuing joint ventures or other linkages
- Research with Invest NI to establish opportunities for a trade mission to Hefei – as part of Invest NI trade development programme

#### Education and training

- Support for school exchange visits: 5 Belfast schools took part in a British Council sponsored visit to Hefei in September 2009 as part of their 'Connecting Classrooms' initiative. There are plans for a return visit to Northern Ireland, probably within the next academic year
- Assistance with universities and colleges welcoming international students – civic receptions and welcome events.

#### Enhancing links with the Chinese community in Belfast

- Plans to deliver enterprise workshops and mentoring in conjunction with Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Belfast, to encourage additional business start-up among Chinese community
- Continuing engagement with Chinese community through Good Relations work.

### Cultural awareness

- Support for key events e.g. Chinese New Year held at St George's Market.

### Information and awareness-raising

- Links established with Local Government International Bureau (LGIB) to exchange information with other cities involved in Chinese city links
- Promotion of linkages and implementation of lessons learned through engagement in Open Cities project looking at impact of economic migration.

As with Belfast's other sister city linkage with Nashville, it is clear that the link is strengthened when agencies other than the City Council build their own contacts within the partner city and develop mutual relationships. Contact with the Chinese city is intermittent and requires a significant investment of time and resources to maintain the momentum of the relationship.

The issue of the Amnesty proposal has not yet had to be addressed directly but will require careful consideration of how it is managed if and when there are to be further civic contacts between the cities. We have been made aware that Hefei may be considering a future visit to Belfast in June 2010. While we do not, as yet, have confirmed dates for the visit, it is proposed that we provide some civic hospitality and assist in developing a programme for the visitors.

With regard to the business to business contacts between the cities, we have engaged with Invest NI to explore the opportunities for a trade mission to Hefei at a future date. Invest NI has confirmed that they plan to take a trade mission to China in the coming year. Their proposed visit locations will not include Hefei but are likely to include Wuhan which is approximately two hours from Hefei by train. Invest NI are happy to support businesses who may want to pursue commercial interests in Hefei as part of an organised trade mission. However the businesses would have to make their own arrangements for Hefei.

### Resource Implications

While final details of visitor numbers and itineraries are not available, it is suggested that a budget of up to £5,000 should cover all overheads associated with the visit.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee approves the allocation of up to £5,000 towards civic hospitality as part of a civic visit by Hefei.

### Decision Tracking

No specific actions to report back.

### Key to Abbreviations

LGIB – Local Government International Bureau”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### Consultation – Proposed New and Extension to Existing Public Hire Taxi Ranks

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 14th April, it had considered a report in relation to consultation which was being undertaken by the Department for Regional Development on the potential for the provision of new or extended taxi ranks in the City. The ranks would be for the use of Belfast Public Hire Taxis only and the proposed changes to taxi legislation did not indicate any extension to taxi ranks for use by standard Private Taxi Hire. The Committee had agreed that an appropriate draft response be formulated for its consideration, a copy of which is set out hereunder:

- **The Council welcomes the proposed extension and additional provision of ranks for public taxi hire in new locations which could enhance provision for customers in Belfast. This support recognises the important role that taxi operators perform in supporting access and contributing to the successful management of the night time economy in Belfast.**
- **In relation to the geographic distribution of the proposed provision the Council would highlight that there are no proposals for provision outside of the centre or the South of the city. The Council would therefore request clarification of the criteria for provision and the process for ongoing review of provision to ensure future equity and access to services for customers across the city.**
- **As part of the assessment for the final locations and the extent of provision consideration should be given to limiting the extension of taxi ranks which are in close proximity to residential areas such as the Chelsea Bar on the Lisburn Road. The potential for adverse impacts arising from noise and potential disruption in these more sensitive locations should be carefully assessed and future operation monitored.**

- The internal Council consultation confirmed that the proposals are unlikely to adversely impact on council operations such as licensed street trading and cleansing. However, the Council would like to highlight that the current concentration of public hire taxis on Donegall Square North causes traffic disruption and should be monitored and enforced as an important element of this review of operational provision.
- This review and increase in provision should form part of a clear process to enact the provisions of the 2008 Taxi Act to address all aspects of the service operation. The Council would request that the consultation and enactment of the Taxi Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 is progressed expeditiously to ensure effective regulation and enforcement of taxi services across both the public and private hire sectors.

The Committee approved the draft response, subject to the inclusion of the following comments:

- further consideration needed to be given to the location of the taxi rank in Smithfield Square North, since the proposed location was on the site of the disabled parking spaces;
- the proposed taxi rank in Berry Street was not a suitable location since it was a one-way street and therefore could cause traffic congestion; and
- consultation was required to be undertaken with the current users of the taxi rank in Berry Street to ascertain whether or not it was suitable.

#### **Northern Ireland Tourism Board Awards 2010**

The Committee was advised that the Belfast Shopping Festival 2009, which provided a major platform for Belfast's Retail Sector throughout the City to promote their business and attract new customers, had been shortlisted as a finalist for the Northern Ireland Tourism Awards 2010. The Awards was a significant event for the tourism and hospitality industry and it was important that the Council was represented thereat. Accordingly, it was recommended that the Council reserve a table at the event, at a cost of £675, for the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, together with appropriate officers and invited guests.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

#### **Last Meeting**

The Chairman referred to the fact that this would be his last meeting prior to the new Chairman being appointed in June and he thanked the Members and officers for their support over the previous year.

Chairman