

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 14th November, 2018

SPECIAL MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);
Aldermen Convery, Haire and Spence; and
Councillors Attwood, Craig, Garrett, Graham,
Long, and McAteer.

In attendance: Mrs S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Mr. S. McCrory, Democratic Services Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McDonough-Brown) and Councillor McAllister.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Rodgers declared an interest in respect of item 2(b) Glentoran Recreation Company Limited, insofar as he was a shareholder with Glentoran Football Club, and he left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports related to the following two items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion of these items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

City Recovery – Investment and Support

(Ms. G. Long, Commissioner for Resilience and Mr J. Greer, Director of Economic Development, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 21st September, it had agreed an initial budget of £1.25m for the City Recovery Programme. Subsequently, at its meeting held on 19th October, the Committee had considered and agreed a programme of City Events and Animation and a revised budget of £1.69m. As the programme had developed further and

additional money had been made available from external sources, expenditure details had altered since the previous report to the Committee.

The Chief Executive reminded the Members also that the Council had submitted detailed proposals to the Treasury and to the Executive Office regarding the need for investment in the city centre as part of the City Recovery Programme. She advised that confirmation had been received of the following:

- £2m investment from the Treasury, announced by the Chancellor as part of his budget statement on 29 October;
- A total of £580k to the Council from the Department for Communities (£380k previously announced, and an additional £200k announced on 12 November);
- Department for the Economy (DfE) contribution of £400k to spend on a range of initiatives to increase visitors to the city centre and boost tourism (although not all of that money would come to the Council or Visit Belfast);

In addition, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) was directly contributing funding of £500k to Translink to fund reduced fares and a travel campaign to encourage use of public transport to drive footfall to the city centre.

The £1.1m which had been announced by the Executive Office on 12th November was in addition to the £380k previously provided to the Council by the Department for Communities, bringing the total amount from NI departments to £1.48m. The Treasury and NI departments investment in City Recovery therefore totalled £3.48m, with £2.58m going directly to the Council.

The Committee was then provided with further proposals in relation to a Temporary Trading Business Support Programme for businesses within the cordon, the current status of the Bank Buildings and access around the area and the proposed animation programme.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted and agreed the overall programme expenditure, which included capital and revenue expenditure;
2. noted that the Council would undertake some expenditure on behalf of other government departments;
3. noted that the total cost of the Phase 1 programme was £2.79m;
4. approved a Temporary Trading Business Support Programme for businesses within the cordon; and
5. agreed that a special meeting on Transportation Issues in the City centre be arranged to which representatives of Translink and the Police Service of Northern Ireland would be invited to attend.

Call-In

The Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 47(2)(c), that the decisions would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council's or the public's interest.

Chairing of Meeting

(In the absence of the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson, the Committee agreed that Alderman Haire take the Chair.)

Alderman Haire in the Chair.

Glentoran Recreation Company Limited

(Mr. C. Campbell, Divisional Solicitor, attended in connection with item.)

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 19th October, it had agreed that due diligence be undertaken in relation to a request for a cash flow which had been received from Glentoran Recreation Company Limited. Subsequently, the Council, at its meeting on 1st November had agreed to delegate its powers for a decision on this matter to the Committee, once the due diligence exercise had been completed.

Accordingly, the Director of Finance and Resources and Resources submitted a report which provided an update on the financial and legal due diligence being undertaken on the cash flow request for a payment of £241,000 by the Glentoran Recreation Company Limited.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to accede to the request on the basis that:

1. The payment would not be made until a Contract of Purchase, which was to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor, was signed by the Belfast Harbour and Glentoran Recreation Company Limited.
2. The Contract for Purchase must include repayment of the cash flow payment directly to the Council by Belfast Harbour upon completion of the sale.

The Committee agreed that the Director of Finance and Resources, in consultation with the City Solicitor, be delegated authority to proceed with the payment of the cash flow once the Contract of Purchase had been signed.

Call-In

The Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 47(2)(c), that the decisions would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council's or the public's interest.

Chairperson