

## Development Committee

Tuesday, 8th November, 2011

### MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Stalford (Chairman);  
Aldermen Ekin, Humphrey and Stoker;  
Councillors Austin, Hartley, Hendron, Keenan, Kelly,  
Kingston, Kyle, Mallon, Maskey, McVeigh, O Muilleoir,  
Reynolds, Robinson and Webb.

In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;  
Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives;  
Ms. C. Taggart, Community Services Manager; and  
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

#### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Mac Giolla Mhin and Spence.

#### Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 10th and 25th October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st November.

#### Requests for Deputations

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from representatives of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau at its meeting on 22nd November; and a presentation from Belfast City Centre Management at its meeting on 13th December.

#### Draft Framework to Tackle Poverty and Reduce Inequalities

The Committee deferred, until its meeting on 22nd November, consideration of the above-mentioned framework document to allow further discussions to take place and to allow a further report on the indicative costs associated with the implementation of the framework to be submitted.

#### World Trade Centre - Licence Renewal

The Director reminded the Committee that the Council held a licence to operate a branch of the World Trade Centre in Belfast. He explained that the licence gave the Council the right to use the World Trade Centre brand and enabled it to develop and deliver a series of activities under its auspices. He provided an outline of the range of initiatives delivered in this regard.

The Director pointed out that, whilst the holding of a licence to operate a World Trade Centre did not require the establishment of an operational centre, approval had previously been granted for the Council to seek external support to assist it to extend the Waterfront Hall. He indicated that such an extension could incorporate new conference facilities, together with exhibition space, and he suggested that this could present the Council with an opportunity to utilise the World Trade Centre licence and brand. He therefore recommended that the Committee authorise the payment of \$10,000 to renew the annual licence fee.

The Committee adopted the recommendation and it was noted that the cost in Sterling would be approximately £6,220.

**South by Southwest - Project 2012**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**"1 Relevant Background Information**

1.1 Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has been playing a key role in supporting the development of the creative industries in Belfast, since 2004, with a key focus on the film, television, digital media, music and design sectors.

1.2 A key project within this support plan has been participation at the South by Southwest (SXSW) music and media conference in Austin, Texas. SXSW is the premier global event focusing on the creative side of the music and entertainment business which takes place in Austin, Texas each year. It involves a conference and exhibition as well as a series of pre-arranged meetings and music shows. The 2012 event will be held from 12-17 March 2012.

1.3 Over the course of the last three years, we have helped local musicians and music businesses to secure new contracts to the value of more than \$500,000 with international labels and publishing companies. These include international partnership agreements between music publishers; US licensing deals for local bands and contracts with broadcasters for the use of local music in their programmes.

**2 Key Issues**

2.1 The creative industries have been identified in a number of recent economic strategies and studies as being central to the future economic growth of Northern Ireland. Recent research undertaken by Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL) suggests that gross value added (GVA) for the sector was almost £800million. There are over 2,500 creative businesses employing

in excess of 30,000 people. The majority of creative businesses are based in Belfast and recent investments in the creative infrastructure – e.g. development of two new studios at Titanic Quarter, redevelopment of Paint Hall studios – are central to capitalising on this potential growth.

- 2.2 Belfast City Council's work in supporting creative businesses has focused on business development initiatives, capability development programmes and infrastructure investment. South by Southwest is a key business development initiative for companies in the priority sectors of Film, Television, Digital Media, Music and Design.
- 2.3 In recent years, Belfast City Council has been part of a collaborative attendance at SXSW by partners from Northern Ireland. Other organisations taking part include Invest NI and DCAL. This has proved to be a cost-effective method of engagement and has enhanced the profile of the individual companies and organisations taking part.
- 2.4 Discussions are currently under way with DCAL, Invest NI and Digital Derry – an umbrella organisation bringing together infrastructure and production companies working in the digital sector in the city of Derry/Londonderry – with a view to planning a potential collaborative presence at SXSW in 2012.
- 2.5 To date, funding has been secured from Invest Northern Ireland to enable 15 digital media companies and 15 music businesses to participate as business delegates on the investment visit. DCAL have offered funding in relation to the overall project management of the trade mission while Digital Derry have secured funding to help contribute to the conference exhibition stand, attendance by musicians and contribution towards the hire of the venue for the networking events.
- 2.6 In order to increase the number of Belfast-based organisations taking part in the event, it is proposed that up to £20,000 be set aside from the Council's creative industries budget to match the funding already in place from the other partners. This will be used towards costs for the hire of the exhibition stand, networking venue, PR, marketing and delegate passes.

### 3 Resource Implications

#### 3.1 Financial

Up to £20,000 requested from Belfast City Council to contribute to the overall budget for the delegation. The financial allocation has been set aside as part of creative industries budget for the current financial year.

4 **Equality and Good Relations Considerations**

4.1 There are no specific equality and good relations considerations attached to this report.

5 **Recommendations**

5.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the proposals to engage in a collaborative trade mission to the SXSW event in Austin, Texas in March 2012
- Approve a budget of up to £20,000 towards costs for Belfast-based participants and shared costs for the conference, exhibition and networking event."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Staffing Arrangements within the  
Development Department**

The Committee approved the appointment of an Interim Director within the Waterfront Hall and authorised the undertaking of a business review of the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Planning Unit, the Policy and Business Development Unit and the Planning and Transport Units. It was noted that a further report in this regard would be submitted in due course.

**Aisling Awards**

The Committee was advised that the Aisling Awards would take place in the Europa Hotel on 17th November. The Director reported that the Council-supported Rise Sculpture had been short-listed for the Belfast Brand Award. It was pointed out that the Council had been offered two complimentary tickets to the ceremony and it was, therefore, recommended that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, or their nominees, represent the Committee at the event.

The Committee agreed to nominate the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, or their nominees, to attend the event and authorised also, at the cost of £125, the attendance of an officer from the Department.

Chairman