

Development Committee

Tuesday, 24th January, 2012

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Stalford (Chairman);
Aldermen Ekin, Humphrey and Stoker;
Councillors Austin, Hartley, Hendron, Keenan,
Kelly, Kingston, Kyle, Mallon, Maskey, McVeigh,
Mac Giolla Mhín, Ó Muilleoir, Reynolds, Robinson
and Spence.

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

Apology

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Webb.

Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau – Business Plan 2012-2013

The Committee considered the undernoted report, together with the associated 2012/2013 Business Plan for the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau:

- “1 **Relevant Background Information**
- 1.1 **Members received a performance update from Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau in September 2011 and agreed to receive a presentation on their 2012/2013 Business Plan on 24 January 2012.**
- 1.2 **The Development Committee receive a presentation on BVCB's Business Plan every year before agreeing Council's financial contribution. The request for financial support from Council for 2012/2013 is £1,842,465, approximately 9% of the Development Department's budget. This is the same level of support agreed in 2011/2012.**
- 1.3 **The Business Plan has been prepared by Dr John Heeley, Director of Best City Marketing and Chair of European Cities Marketing. It represents the second year instalment of the Belfast City Region Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan 2011–2014, presented and agreed by Council in February 2011.**

2 Key Issues

2.1 The Belfast City Region and Visitor Servicing Plan 2011- 2014 provided a fresh look at BVCB and established new performance measurements linked to campaigns, business tourism, generating bed nights and income generation to name a few. It highlighted a number of areas that needed to be addressed including the need for BVCB to influence the marketing activity of NITB and Tourism Ireland; the importance of digital marketing, the need for better and more regular research and better defined roles and responsibilities around the Belfast Brand implementation.

2.2 The Business Plan for Year 2, now focuses on:

- realignment of resources to support implementation of key priority areas of work;**
- a more sales orientated approach;**
- further refinement of key performance indicators;**
- empowerment of the Board to oversee BVCB’s performance;**
- Change of name, website domain for BVCB;**
- A new core purpose statement – “To create and service visitors for Belfast in order to generate economic benefit for the city region”;**
- Introduction of a dedicated monitoring and evaluation framework and BVCB’s initiatives to calculate the organisations contribution to tourism growth.**

2.3 The attached plan also highlights the emerging role for BVCB to become an integrated city marketing agency and custodian of the Belfast B Brand. Members will be aware that this is an area that the Development Committee has discussed previously in relation to an integrated approach to not only marketing Belfast as a tourist destination but also a place to invest in, work in and study in and indeed has invited Andrew Stokes, Chief Executive of Marketing Manchester to speak at the next State of the City Breakfast seminar on 24 January 2012. This agency is responsible for the national and international promotion of the Manchester city-region. Officers would recommend that Members if available attend this session.

- 2.4 Members are also aware of previous discussions on the role of Belfast City Centre Management and the need to ensure that there are clear roles and responsibilities defined between BVCB and BCCM. BCCM's Business Plan and request for funding for 2012/2013 were presented to the Development Committee on 13 December 2011 and it was agreed that a report would be brought back to the Committee, outlining a number of options for future Council support of the organisation.
- 2.5 It is recommended that Members receive a presentation from Gerry Lennon, Chief Executive of BVCB on the 24 January 2012. This will provide an opportunity for Members to review BVCB's plans for 2012/2013.
- 2.6 Before agreeing the plans however, officers recommend that a special meeting to discuss both BVCB and BCCM plans for 2012/13 and how an integrated approach to marketing Belfast as presented by Marketing Manchester might be achieved for the city. As both BVCB and BCCM will have had the opportunity to present to Committee, it is anticipated that this session will be for Members and officers only.

3 **Resource Implications**

- 3.1 The request from BVCB is for £1,842,465 and is included in the Departmental estimates.

4 **Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Committee is requested to:-
- i. receive a presentation from BVCB; and
 - ii. agree to hold a special meeting to discuss in detail both BVCB and BCCM plans for 2012/2013.

It was reported that Mr. G. Lennon and Mr. S. Magorrian, representing the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman.

Mr. Lennon reviewed the work which the Bureau had undertaken during 2011 and provided information on the number of visitors which the City had attracted during that period. He outlined the economic challenges which the Bureau would face during the forthcoming years and provided examples of how it aimed to strengthen Belfast's status as a major European city break destination. He then referred to the themes and performance indicators which would oversee the work of the Bureau and outlined the ongoing plans for it to review its objectives with a view, at a future date, to concentrating solely on marketing the City on an international basis.

A prolonged discussion ensued in respect of the Business Plan and a range of views were expressed by Members regarding its contents. The point was made that the issue of the permanent re-location of the Belfast Welcome Centre needed to be addressed and resolved at the earliest opportunity. Other Members suggested that the overall governance arrangements for the Bureau were somewhat cumbersome and welcomed the fact that this aspect, together with a potential name change for the Bureau, were under review. Further issues were raised by Members regarding the Bureau's promotion of the annual 'Orangefest' event; the potential for enhancing the City's tourism product insofar as it related to political tourism; and the requirement for the City to establish additional conference and exhibition facilities.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Stoker,
Seconded by Alderman Ekin and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to provide the sum of £1,842,465 to the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau for the 2012/2013 financial year.

It was agreed further that a special meeting to discuss issues pertinent to the promotion of the City, to which representatives of Tourism Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board be invited to attend, be held on a date to be determined in conjunction with the Chairman.

Titanic Belfast Festival 2012 and 2012/2013 Events Programme

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

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to:

- **Request approval for the Council's programme of events in 2012/13 inclusive of Olympic and Paralympic Games activity and the World Irish Dancing Championships.**
- **Update Members on the Titanic Belfast Festival 2012 (It should be noted that Council approval exists for Titanic Centenary activity in February 2011)**

1.2 **Background**

Over that last decade and half Belfast City Council has developed an annual programme of events alongside one-off events. The programme spans the calendar year from the annual St Patrick's Day concert and parade in the spring, to the Christmas Lights Switch-on in the winter, and includes major sporting events.

- 1.3 The annual budget for the events in the 2012/13 period is £1.7m and was approved by the Development Committee at its meeting on 10 January 2012 and is subject to ratification by Council on 1 February 2012.

2 **Key Issues**

2.1 **Titanic Belfast Festival 2012 and 2012/13 Events Programme**

Details of the events programme, which is primarily based around key public and celebratory holidays and incorporates major sporting events, including the Belfast Marathon, is indicated in Table 1 below, with further detail on the Titanic Belfast Festival 2012 shown in Appendix 1. This event is being co-funded and coordinated with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

2.2 **Table 1**

Event & Date(s)

Additional Details

World Irish Dancing
Championships:
30 March-7 April 2012

This will be the fourth time that Belfast has hosted the 'Olympics' of Irish Dancing, which will see thousands of competitors from around the world come to our city.

It should be noted a third venue is now required (St George's Market) and there is a request to increase the original staging budget from £200k to £225k. The need for the third venue is due to increasing numbers of competitors than when the Belfast bid was submitted in 2010.

The additional £25,000 would be allocated from within the Council's existing 2012 programme budgets.

**Titanic Belfast Festival:
31 March – 22 April**

This event programme will not only mark the centenary of the sailing and sinking of the RMS Titanic, but also the opening of the Titanic Belfast attraction. The key elements of the programme are:

- International Digital Lighting Show
- MTV World Stage Concert
- Titanic Memorial Garden and Commemorative event
- Titanic 'the Play' with the MAC; Belfast Festival; Scottish National Theatre and Barbican
- BBC Memorial Concert
- BBC Proms concert

These events will be complemented with a series of talks, tours, exhibitions, drama and music. In addition the planned programme will also have input from other Titanic locations in: Cobh, Co Cork, Cherbourg, Southampton and Liverpool. There is also input from NITB; Titanic Belfast and Belfast Titanic Society.

**Deep River Rock Belfast
City Marathon:
7 May**

This will be the 31st year of Ireland's biggest mass participation event, which attracted over 20,000 competitors in 2011, a record for the event. At the time of writing this report some 1,200 marathon entries have been received for the 2012 event.

**Olympic Torch Evening
Celebration:
6 June**

The Olympic flame will arrive into Belfast and traverse across the city culminating with an evening celebration, outside the grounds of City Hall, involving sports personalities and musical performances. Finance for the Olympic Torch Celebration would be funded from Council agreed reserves set aside in 2012/2013 budgets in regard to staging major international events – total cost would be £50,000.

**Land of Giants:
30 June**

This event will involve the Lord Mayor and will replace the Lord Mayor's Carnival in 2012. It is one of only four UK community celebrations that are part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. The event is being delivered via a limited not-for-profit company which consists of: Beat Initiative; Belfast Community Circus; Young at Art and BCC.

**Olympic and Paralympic
Live Site programme:
TBC**

This would be a series of events with links to Olympic and Paralympic programming along with live links to Royal Opera House in London. The series of events would be funded from the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL) as part of its input to the BBC Live Site Screen programming at City Hall.

**European Pipe Band
Championship:
28 July**

Committee approved the bidding for this event in 2009 and Belfast was successful in securing this prestigious event for a three year period (2010-2012). This one day event is anticipated to attract in the region of 12,000 spectators. The overall programming is operated in conjunction with the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association.

**Paralympic Flame
Festival:
25 August**

The proposed event from the London 2012 organisers will see the Paralympic flame lit on the steps of Stormont and then traverse across Belfast, arriving into the grounds of City Hall for an afternoon/evening of entertainment and sports. Finance for the Paralympic Flame Festival would come from Council agreed reserves in regard to staging major international events – total cost would be £25,000.

**Belfast Autumn Fair:
22 & 23 September
operated with BCC
Parks and Leisure**

This proposed event would be run in cooperation with BCC Parks & Leisure incorporating their traditional Autumn Flower Show. This event normally attracts an audience of 12,000 people.

**Halloween Metro
Monster Mash: Date
TBC but either the
31 Oct or the nearest
date to it**

Annually this event has attracted an audience in excess of 25,000 and in the last few years has been staged in Belfast Harbour, outside the Odyssey complex. Titanic Slipways are also being assessed as a suitable site in 2012.

**Christmas Switch-on
and programme:
Saturday 17 November**

Anecdotally seen as the official start of the City's festive season this programme would be launched with the annual switch-on, orientated towards a family audience. Members are asked to note a more detailed report on this event will be taken to Committee in the next two months due to crowd management issues encountered at the 2011 event.

**Christmas Switch-on
and programme:
Saturday 17 November**

The 2012 programme includes costs for a schools carol service at the Belfast Waterfront (organised with the Belfast School of Music), live music at City Hall and festive lighting on the building. The festive lighting would be based on the final lighting signage in 2011.

**St Patrick's Day:
17 March 2013**

This planned event encompasses a carnival parade and live concert to mark St Patrick's Day. Parade participants come from across the city with the event attracting out-of-city and out-of-state visitors.

**Support for Sport
funding**

This is an annual programme of funding that sports clubs and sports event organisers can access. The programme is issued via a single tranche via public notices and is accessible via the Council's webpage.

Sail Training Funding

As in previous years it is proposed that this funding will be used in connection with Ocean Youth Trust to continue the work of enhancing young people's personal skills base via sailing activities. This process played an important part in BCC securing the Tall Ships race in 2015. In 2011, 424 young Belfast people availed of this opportunity.

Members are asked to note that it is essential to continue the Council's backing going forward to the 2015 Tall Ships event.

**Event Economic Impact
Surveys & Event Bidding**

This proposed finance comprises the economic surveys undertaken for each event and additionally provides for a level of contingency for the annual events programme.

2.3 Lord Mayor's Carnival 2012 and New Year's Eve 2012

The above has neither a Lord Mayor's Carnival event nor a New Year's Eve event programmed in 2012. The absence of the Lord Mayor's event is due to the Council agreeing to the transfer of resources to the Land of Giants project. However, there will be input from the 2012/13 Lord Mayor into the project delivery on 30th June. A report on the Lord Mayor's event will be taken to Committee next month.

2.4 The lack of a New Year's event is in line with 2008 Members' decision to halt funding, to this event, due to costs.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

The total overall budget for this programme, inclusive of the Titanic Belfast Festival, is £1.7 million.

3.2 The additional £25,000 for the World Irish Dancing Championships would also be allocated from within the Council's existing 2012/13 programme budgets. The additional finance for the Olympic Torch Run Celebration and Paralympic Flame Festival would be funded from Council agreed reserves set aside in 2012/2013 in regard to staging major international events at a total cost of £75,000.

4 Recommendations

4.1 The following decisions are required from Members:

- (i) to note the programme details for Titanic Belfast Festival 2012
- (ii) to endorse the 2012/13 programme, subject to full Council approval on the Department's budgets
- (iii) to approve £25,000 additional finance for the World Irish Dancing Championships in 2012
- (iv) to approve finance for the Olympic Torch Run Celebration and Paralympic Flame Festival funded from reserves set aside in 2012/2013 in regard to staging major international events at a total cost of £75,000."

Regarding plans outlined within the report to utilise St. George's Market as a third venue for the hosting of the Irish World Dancing Championships, a Member referred to a request for information which he had submitted to the Director in respect of the legal position regarding the priority usage of St. George's Market by local community groups. He indicated that he had received no clarification and sought further information in this regard.

In response, the Director referred to the contents of the 1996 contract between the Council and the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which oversaw the agreement for the restoration of the building, which stated, within Clause 8, that there was no specific arrangement in place for community groups but merely an agreement that the Council would arrange for the general public to have full and appropriate access to the property and provide, on demand, details of such access to the National Heritage Memorial Fund. In addition, the Council would ensure that no person would be denied unreasonable access to the property.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

International Conferences

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 8th November, it had agreed that it would be represented at the South by Southwest Music and Media Conference, which would take place in Austin, Texas, from 12th till 17th March. The Director pointed out that, subsequent to the aforementioned decision, an invitation had been received from the Irish Technology Leadership Group, a deputation from which had undertaken a study visit to Belfast in November, inviting the Council to be represented at its 5th Annual Innovation Summit, which would take place in San Jose, California, from 12th till 13th March. The Director then outlined the costs which would be incurred and the benefits which might be derived in agreeing to send an additional Council deputation to the Innovation Summit and requested that the Committee consider whether it wished to be represented at both events.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to the following:

- that it be represented at the South by Southwest Music and Media Conference from 12th till 17th March and authorised the attendance at the event of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the Director, or their nominees, and agreed also to authorise the travel and subsistence payments in connection therewith. It was noted that the cost per delegate would not exceed £1,800; and
- that the Head of Economic Initiatives liaise with representatives of Invest NI to establish whether it intended to send a delegation to the Irish Technology Leadership Group's Summit and to update Members in this regard at its meeting in February to enable the Committee to consider whether it wished to be represented thereat.

St. George's Sunday Market - Review

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 12th January, 2011 it had agreed to extend the period for the operation of the St. George's Sunday Market for a further year, subject to the Committee reviewing that decision in January, 2012. Accordingly, the Director outlined the principal aspects of a report which indicated that there had been a significant increase in the number of customers attending the Market on a Sunday. In a survey carried out in November, 2011 it had been noted that 4,167 members of the public had attended the Market, which was almost double the numbers recorded twelve months' previously. In addition, the Market had attracted 127 traders on a consistent basis and approximately twenty casual traders attended each Sunday to partake in the Market. He pointed out that an estimated income to the Council of approximately £90,000 per year was generated by the holding of the Sunday Market. He concluded by reporting that both customers and traders had expressed satisfaction with the running of the Market and that research had indicated that further businesses within the City Centre had, in turn, benefitted financially. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee endorse the holding of the Sunday Market on a permanent basis.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme - Update

The Committee considered the contents of a report which outlined the progress achieved to date in the Council's involvement in the above-mentioned programme. The Director outlined the principal aspects of the report and indicated that, to date, £483,000 of funding had been provided through the programme to projects within the Council area and that the total allocation for Belfast-based projects would be in the region of £1,100,000. He outlined the range of initiatives which had been funded through the programme, which included a Mountain Bike Trail and the Belfast Hills Strategic Tourism Project, and he reported that additional funding had been approved for the undernoted projects:

- (i) Belfast Hills Rural Heritage Project – a project aimed at protecting Belfast's natural heritage and providing enhanced access to rural heritage sites;
- (ii) Village Plan for Hannahstown – a project aimed at delivering physical regeneration within the Hannahstown area; and
- (iii) 'A Guide to the Lagan Canal' – a publication by the Lagan Canal Trust which would provide additional tourist information.

After discussion, during which the Director answered questions in respect of the feasibility of the Mountain Loney, which provided access to the Black Mountain and was located in the upper Whiterock area, and the Lagan Canal benefitting under the terms of the Programme, the Committee noted the information provided.

Rate Relief Projects - 'Make a Difference' Events

The Committee was advised that a request for assistance in the sum of £2,500 had been received from Land and Property Services, which was the agency responsible for rating, valuation and land registration, seeking the Council's support for the holding of a series of 'Make a Difference' awareness-raising sessions on the issue of rate relief in Belfast. These events would be aimed at providing advice and assistance on rate relief to those who worked directly with local communities and would be held between 10.00 a.m. and 12.00 noon on the following dates in the locations outlined:

- 21st February, Spectrum Centre, Shankill Road;
- 5th March, Whiterock Leisure Centre;
- 9th March, Dee Street Community Centre;
- 13th March, Olympia Community Centre; and
- 20th March, Groundwork Offices, Duncairn Gardens.

The Director reported that the Council's contribution towards the events would enable the provision of hospitality, room hire and the production of information leaflets. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee accede to the request as outlined.

The Committee agreed to authorise expenditure in the sum of £2,500 for the hosting of the 'Make a Difference' events.

Feasibility Study: Former Gilpin's Site - Sandy Row

The Committee was advised that the Director had, in response to a request from Belfast South Community Resources, met with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Assistant Regional Director of Regeneration Services in respect of the potential for a joint feasibility study being carried out for the redevelopment of the former Gilpin's site in Sandy Row. The Director reported that the site, which encompassed approximately 2.3 acres, had, for some time, lay vacant due to the fact that earlier plans by the owner to redevelop the site had been withdrawn due to significant local opposition and the impact of the economic downturn. It was reported that the owners of the site had since indicated that they would be willing to dispose of some or the entire site if a suitable social enterprise could be developed. Accordingly, the Director reported that the Housing Executive had written to advise the Council that it was prepared to provide a sum of £10,000, which would represent 50% of the total cost of the feasibility study, on the basis that the Council would match fund this contribution.

The Director reminded the Committee that Sandy Row had been included within the Council's Renewing the Routes Programme. He pointed out that two of the initiative's objectives were to improve the physical environment of the area and to make it more attractive to investors. In this regard, he stated that a feasibility study into the future use of the site would complement the Council's ongoing work. He added that the

Council's contribution would be met from an anticipated underspend within the Department's Strategic Neighbourhood Action Plan budget for 2011/2012 and, accordingly, he recommended that the Committee authorise expenditure for the purposes of the feasibility study, which would include also an economic appraisal of the site.

The Committee agreed to authorise expenditure in the sum of £10,000 for the undertaking, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, of a feasibility study and economic appraisal at the site.

Titanic Engagement Schools' Project

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will recall that Council's Development Committee, at a meeting on 15th June 2011, agreed to embark on a major engagement exercise with every section of society in partnership with Titanic Foundation, ensuring that everyone across the city could benefit from Titanic developments and activities.

2 Key Issues

2.1 A key objective of our community engagement plan is to work through, and with, key structures within local communities to promote Titanic and discussions with the community, voluntary and other public sector organisations are ongoing.

2.2 As the Titanic theme has grown in momentum over recent months Council officers have been approached by a number of schools and community and youth organisations in developing Titanic themed projects across a wide range of areas from school resources to regeneration projects.

2.3 A number of these proposed projects are highlighted below:

- Nettlefield Primary School (East Belfast) – this is a small project which will see the school work with a local residents group (Ravenslink Residents Association) to develop a photo mosaic of the Titanic containing Titanic facts about the ship. This will involve research by the school children and the final art piece (lightweight aluminium) will be displayed at the school, near of similar art projects in the grounds.**

- Colaiste Feirste School (West Belfast) – this project will involve a number of teenagers at the school researching Irish Language and (more generally) Irelands links to the Titanic, with this work linking into a regeneration project in close proximity to the school ('Giants Foot' at Benview Park) and other working themes i.e. the 2012 Olympics.
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) (City Wide) – working with and developing on the Colaiste Fierste project, CnaG aim to work with Boys Model School (North Belfast) and Ashfield Girls School (East Belfast) to research Irelands links to Titanic and develop an educational resource for use across all schools (also translated for use in Irish Medium Education).
- The Hubb Community Centre (North Belfast) – the volunteers in this organisation wish to develop a cross community historical and cultural project, with initial youth workshops developing the theme and the final piece being a form of modern street art on an agreed location.
- Greater Village Regeneration Trust (South Belfast) – there is the potential to tie the Titanic theme into an upcoming youth/regeneration project in the Sandy Row area, as well as possibly developing a tapestry project about the area's relationship with the industrial age and the Titanic.
- Malvern Primary School Shankill (Greater Shankill) – this photography project will give school children an opportunity to present their views of how they see modern Belfast and how it tells the story of the Titanic both past and present. Pupils will be equipped with disposable cameras and project binders and will undertake pre-planned tours of associated sites such as the former Shipyard and City Hall etc. The project will conclude in April with a small exhibition of the pupils work.

2.4 These projects have been developed by a number of organisations and illustrate the growing enthusiasm for celebrating the Titanic centenary, the opening of Titanic Belfast and the regeneration of Titanic Quarter.

2.5 In order to actively reach out to Belfast communities and to ensure that all citizens have an opportunity to be involved in the excitement surrounding Titanic, it is requested that permission be granted to progress the projects outlined above. Members are also encouraged to help build further links to schools, community/voluntary and youth organisations across the city.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Approval is requested for £30,000 to be reallocated from existing Titanic engagement resources to support school, community/voluntary and youth projects across the City.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to:

1. note the contents of the report; and
2. approve the proposal to reallocate up to £30,000 from existing community engagement funds to support a range of school, community/voluntary and youth projects across the city.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairman