

Development Committee

Tuesday, 21st February, 2012

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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

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

Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were declared:

- In respect of item 5b, viz., New York / New Belfast and One City conferences, Councillor Ó Muilleoir indicated that he was a member of the Board of Directors of the Belfast Media Group, which was hosting the aforementioned conferences; and
- Regarding item 6a, viz., Advice Allocation Review, Alderman Stoker and Councillors Austin and Keenan indicated that they were associated with groups which were members of the various consortia in receipt of funding under the programme.

Noted.

Requests for Deputations

It was reported that no requests had been received.

Staffing Arrangements at the Waterfront and Ulster Halls

In the absence of the Director, the Committee agreed to defer, to its meeting on 6th March, consideration of the above-mentioned matter.

Departmental Plan - Quarterly Update

The Committee considered the quarterly update on the Departmental Plan for the period ending 31st December, 2011. The Head of Economic Initiatives clarified a number of issues in respect of the Plan and undertook to update individual Members on various matters which had been raised.

Noted.

Quarterly Finance Report - Quarter 3 2011/2012

The Committee considered the Department's quarterly finance report for the period from 30th September till 31st December, 2011. The Head of Economic Initiatives answered a range of Members' questions in respect of the Department's financial position and in particular the extent of, and factors contributing to, a projected year-end under spend.

Noted.

Outstanding Accounts

In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, the Head of Economic Initiatives sought the Committee's authority to have a number of outstanding accounts amounting to £8,561.13 written off, a schedule of which had been submitted for the Committee's information together with a report which outlined the Council's debt management procedures. She pointed out that all reasonable measures had been taken to recover the debts.

After discussion, Committee granted the authority sought.

Departmental Scale of Charges - 2012/2013

The Committee considered a report in respect of an annual review of the scale of charges applicable for hire charges at the Waterfront and Ulster Halls, St. George's Market and the Council's community centres. The Head of Economic Initiatives explained that, after careful consideration, it had been proposed that there would be no increase in the financial year 2012/2013 for the hire of the Waterfront and Ulster Halls, St. George's Market and for the Council's community centres. Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee endorse the proposal that there be no price increase in 2012/2013.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposal that the Council would not increase charges applied for stall hire at St. George's Market. The point was made that, given the success of the various markets and the demand for stalls at the location, it would not be unreasonable to increase charges to offset staffing and running costs.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that there be no increase in charges applied for the hire of the Waterfront and Ulster Halls, St. George's Market and for the Council's community centres. It was noted that a report would be submitted for the Committee's consideration in due course in respect of future pricing policy at St. George's Market.

Belfast City Masterplan

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 26th January, it had agreed to defer, for a period of two weeks, consideration of the Council's draft Masterplan to enable Party briefings to be delivered to those Parties who so wished to receive them. At the Committee's meeting on 7th February, the Director had pointed out that it had been unfeasible to deliver such briefings and, accordingly, he had indicated that the Masterplan would be placed on the Committee's agenda for consideration on 21st February.

The Head of Economic Initiatives pointed out that in the interim period Party briefings had been delivered to all the Parties with the exception of the Progressive Unionist Party, whose briefing was scheduled for 23rd February. She reported that initial responses to the Masterplan had been positive in general. However, there had been a number of suggestions forwarded on how the Council might revise and modify the Masterplan prior to it being issued for wider consultation. Concerns had been raised that, in light of the Council's stated desire to address the issue of poverty, there existed little or no scope within the Masterplan to enable the Council to make direct interventions to address deprivation, unemployment and disadvantage. In addition, it had been suggested that additional neighbourhoods should be included within the Masterplan to address issues of integration and connectivity to the City centre. Further matters regarding linkages to neighbourhood hubs, the provision of public transport and international travel provision in the City had been identified as issues for further consideration.

The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that there existed a general consensus that the Masterplan should be subjected to further political scrutiny in order to align it with the Council's Investment Programme for 2012/2015, and to take into account the priorities set out within the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government. In order to achieve this, it was felt that consultation on the Masterplan should be carried out on a over two phases, with initial engagement undertaken with the various departments within the Northern Ireland Executive with a view to garnering support for the Masterplan and creating a shared agenda for the City. Once that stage had been completed, the Masterplan would then be issued for additional consultation to allow the Council to gauge wider perceptions and enable further modifications to be carried out, if necessary.

After discussion, the Committee noted the comments of the Political Parties in respect of the Masterplan and agreed to the following course of action:

- that consultation on the Masterplan be carried out over two phases, with initial discussions being held with representatives of the various departments within the Northern Ireland Executive; and
- that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, together with the Political Party Leaders, would represent the Council at such discussions.

Renewing the Routes Initiative 2012/2016

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 In November 2011 Members agreed a ‘Future Renewing the Routes Programme 2012-2016’ paper that set up the broad parameters of the initiative. These included:**

- A four year plan based on an allocation of £300,000 per annum;
 - two routes to be targeted per annum, each with a budget of £150,000;
 - a city-wide approach with north, south, east and west geographical split; and
 - an additional £40,000 to be allocated to provide the flexibility to respond to individual requests from trader groups with potential projects to be brought forward to Committee for consideration.
- 1.2 Members will note that it was further agreed work would continue to develop two future strands of the Renewing the Routes programme, comprising the continuation of the arterial routes with the addition of a complementary neighbourhood areas approach. It was recognised that the neighbourhood areas requires further consideration as part of the wider Council investment agenda and this ongoing work will be the subject of a further report.
- 1.3 The Committee was previously presented with initial analysis of all the arterial routes based on the previously agreed methodology that looked specifically at land status; occupancy rates' building condition; shop front conditions; social and economic deprivation. This initial assessment was used to illustrate the potential for categorisation into short, medium and longer term priorities as identified in the previously circulated prioritisation chart Appendix 1a.
- 1.4 Members agreed at the November Committee that in order to refine the assessment of priorities and inform a final decision on those areas to target, over a four year programme, a number of further considerations should be examined. This further consideration would take account of wider issues and influences that would not be picked up through the physical survey results. The detail of which is included in Appendix 2.
- 1.5 The additional consideration were agreed as:
- Whether the area forms a natural community/commercial focus?
 - The potential impact of any complementary regeneration activities planned for the area.
 - The extent to which areas have benefited from previous support from the programme.
 - Would a renewing the routes type project would have any impact in the area?

1.6 Members may wish to note that areas agreed at Committee in August 2011 are subject to continued works and include Sandy Row, Castlereagh Street, Antrim Road and the Grosvenor Road. These areas have been excluded from this analysis discussed above.

2 Key Issues

2.1 The initial survey identified the potential short to longer term target areas based on purely physical conditions combined with social and economic deprivation data for the individual areas. The initial assessment results were previously circulated in a diagram form highlighting the top 20% as the potential short term priorities.

2.2 The additional considerations (paragraph 1.5 above) were assessed on a red, amber, green basis similar to the approach used to assess the survey data. This assessment of the wider influences was combined with the results from the physical survey to determine whether or not it would influence the potential prioritisation.

2.3 The combined assessment resulted in a modified short-term priority list for the different parts of the city. The revised outcomes are outlined in an appended prioritisation chart covering the potential short and medium term opportunities (Appendix 1b). From this revised listing the suggested priorities for the four year programme are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1.

<u>2012 -13</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Road</u>	<u>Location</u>
	South	Ormeau 2	Ormeau Embankment to Haywood Avenue
	East	Newtownards 1	Bridge End to Witham Street
<u>2013 -14</u>	North	Oldpark 2	Torrens Avenue to Clifftondene Crescent
	West	Andersonstown	4 Hillhead Crescent to Suffolk Road
<u>2014 -15</u>	South	Lisburn 1	Bradbury Place to
	East	Tates Avenue Castlereagh	2 Beersbridge Rd to Grand Parade
<u>2015 -16</u>	North	York 2	Fife Street to York Park
	West	Shankill 1	Peters Hill to Agnes Street

- 2.5 It is proposed that the integrated development plans for the individual prioritised routes will subsequently be brought back for Committee consideration prior to final approval of the individual projects for each area.
- 2.6 The Committee should also be aware that the consultations and further consideration highlighted an anomaly and the potential to review the approach to some of the outlying areas of the arterial routes. In many instances the low priority categorisation reflects the better environments and the more residential nature of the areas which limits the potential for works to be carried out under the main Renewing the Routes programme. There are, however, smaller clusters of commercial and community activity within many of these areas which perform an important local role and could benefit from regeneration activity.
- 2.7 The poor physical condition of these clusters and the opportunity for regeneration may be masked by the positive results arising from broader environmental assessment and the more residential nature of the wider area. It is therefore suggested that these more peripheral parts of the routes are reassessed to identify where it may be appropriate to adopt a different classification and approach. This review would consider the opportunities for their inclusion within the proposed neighbourhood areas or as a separate initiative.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 It should be noted that provisions of £300,000, for the proposed continuation of Renewing the Routes activity, has been made within the agreed Department budgets for the 2012/13 financial year.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

- 4.1 There are no Equality or Good Relations considerations attached to this report.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that Members:
1. considers the proposed target areas as set out in Table 1 and if appropriate endorses the suggested priorities and phasing as the basis for a four year programme;

2. note the ongoing work in relation to the identification of local neighbourhood regeneration and the integration with wider Council; and
3. endorse the proposed review of the routes classified in the longer-term category to assess the opportunities for their inclusion within the proposed neighbourhood areas or as a separate initiative.”

After discussion, during which the Head of Economic Initiatives undertook to examine the feasibility of extending the Ormeau Road 2 initiative from Haywood Avenue to the roundabout at the junction of the Ormeau and Ravenhill Roads, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Belfast City Centre Management –
Funding Allocation 2012/2013**

The Committee considered the undernoted report together with an associated business plan for Belfast City Centre Management for 2011/2013:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 **Members will be aware that Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) made a presentation to the Development Committee in December 2011 reporting back on progress against target within their business plan. This is a two year business plan (2011-2013) which was previously endorsed by the Development Committee in February 2011. A copy of the business plan is attached for information (Appendix 1).**
- 1.2 **At the December 2011 meeting, members noted the proposed areas of work for the coming financial year and posed a number of questions regarding planned activity and how this aligned with the work of other organisations, including the Council.**
- 1.3 **It was noted that the draft business plan assumed a Belfast City Council contribution of £190,000 per annum core funding, with an expectation of additional support for specific events and initiatives including Belfast Business Awards, community safety activities and Retail NI conference.**
- 1.4 **It was agreed that a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Development Committee outlining proposed funding for the organisation for the coming financial year (2012-2013).**

2 Key Issues

- 2.1** Belfast City Centre Management proposes to “deliver additional services in Belfast, on behalf of its core funders, which contribute in a measurable way to a cleaner, safer and more economically vibrant and accessible city centre.
- 2.2** A draft business plan for the period 2011-2013 was developed in early 2011 and has been agreed by BCCM’s Board (and this committee previously). It sets out a series of activities which are coordinated through three working groups, namely:
- Public space management
 - Safer city
 - Economic performance
- 2.2** Each working group is responsible for the development and delivery of action plan which includes targets, measurements and resource allocation. Quarterly reports outlining progress against target are presented in order to release the next tranche of funding from Belfast City Council.
- 2.3** The work of the organisation is wide-ranging and crosses a number of departments and services, principally within the Development and Health and Environmental Services Departments. The Director of Environmental Health chairs the Public Space Management group while the Director of Development and Head of Economic Initiatives – along with elected members – are represented on the board. Other officers across the council are also represented on other working groups.
- 2.4** At the February 2011 meeting of the Development Committee, it was agreed that, subject to general endorsement of the business plan by this Committee, officers would work with the management team at BCCM to further refine the work of these groups, to ensure compliance with wider council policies and to support the delivery of council objectives. It is proposed that members agree to this as a way forward for the coming financial year.
- 2.5** From the Development Committee’s perspective, there are a number of key areas of work in which BCCM can support our activities in the coming year. These include:
- Delivery of targeted strategy to attract brands and retailers not currently present in the city
 - Coordination of activities to animate vacant premises, in conjunction with other relevant partners

- Support in delivery of Belfast Business Awards
- Support in development and delivery of initiatives to support the independent retail sector
- Support for progressing major schemes, including Royal Exchange
- Support in delivery of street dressing and lighting initiatives.

2.6 Members will be aware that the draft masterplan for the city has identified the need to nurture city centre cohesion, 'leading the continued multifunctional regeneration of the city'. It is clear that there is a need for a concerted approach to developing "the most important economic space in the region". Belfast City Centre Management, among others, has a role to play in this regard. However it is also important to take account of wider issues impacting on city centre development and to support the emergence of a 'mixed-economy' city centre, as opposed to the traditional retail-led regeneration schemes which have been pursued in the past.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 The business plan for the period 2012-2013 identifies a core funding contribution from Belfast City Council of £190,000. A number of additional schemes involving Council financial support are also identified but these will be brought back for Committee approval, if required.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the BCCM business plan 2011-2013, attached
- Note and approve the funding request for £190,000 core funding in the coming year
- Agree that, if the funding is approved, officers should work with the management team at BCCM to further refine the work of the organisation, to ensure compliance with wider council policies and to support the delivery of council objectives."

During discussion, the point was made that it would be prudent for the Council to convene a series of meetings with representatives from the both the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau and Belfast City Centre Management with a view to examining the future role of both bodies in the promotion of the City. It was felt that such an initiative would assist in identifying areas where duplication existed and enable, in conjunction with the Council, the marketing of the City in a more co-ordinated manner.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Humphrey,
Seconded by Alderman Ekin and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendations within the report and provide funding in the sum of £190,000 to Belfast City Centre Management for the financial year 2012/2013 and agrees also that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Committee, together with one Member from each of the remaining Parties, convenes a series of meetings with representatives from the both the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau and Belfast City Centre Management to examine the future role of both bodies in the promotion of the City.

European Social Fund - Match Funding Requests

(Mrs. Lisa Toland, Economic Development Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 7th February, it had agreed to defer consideration of applications for match-funding of £54,760 in respect of the 'HARTE Project' and £5,000 in respect of the 'Learn to Earn Programme'. That was to enable further information to be provided in respect of Council programmes supported by the European Social Fund and additional details to be submitted in respect of the particular projects for which funding had been deferred. Accordingly, the Committee considered a report in this regard, together with an in-depth review of the number of participants on the two particular projects; the type of training and jobs provided through each, and an outline of the plans for both projects in 2012/2013.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to award the match funding as requested to the 'HARTE Project' and the 'Learn to Earn Programme' and agreed further that, in future, quarterly monitoring reports would be submitted for the Committee's consideration in respect of all programmes supported by the European Social Fund in receipt of match funding from the Council.

INTERREG Funding - Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware that there is currently an open funding call with respect to the Cross border INTERREG IVA programme which is administered through the Special European Programmes Body (SEUPB).**
- 1.2 This is the final call within the 256m Euro programme and is worth between 30-40 m euros with 100% funding available for projects. Details of the call are as follows;**

- Call opened 3rd January 2012
- Call closed 17th February 2012
- New 2 Stage Application process with a shorter form to be submitted on 17th February 2012. This will be followed by a robust and detailed business plan to be submitted by 11th May 2012, as Stage 2, if the project passes initial criteria.

1.3 The following are key requirements for each project;

- promoting cross border-public sector collaboration
- must lead to more efficient delivery of public services and lead to clear and measurable economic impact
- cross border public sector collaboration can be around enterprise, tourism, ICT, transport, energy and health
- needs to be strategic in nature rather than small with low impact

1.4 Since the call opened, Belfast City Council's EU Unit has been working intensively to support the development of project ideas from within Belfast City Council and also with COMET stakeholders. Members are asked to note that the dedicated COMET INTERREG team based within the EU Unit has currently only a part time administration resource at the moment, as the INTERREG Manager has been off sick since early November 2011

1.5 The EU Unit has provided the following support since the opening of the call;

- Encouragement of all European Unit database contacts to attend one of the three Special European Programmes Body (SEUPB) led information workshops held in January 2012.
- hosting of a Belfast City Council (BCC) led information workshop held in City Hall on January 2012 supported by the Special European Programmes Body (SEUPB)
- 1-2-1 meetings held with all interested parties.
- Partner search carried out on request.
- Assistance in writing applications.

1.6 Members are asked to note that projects going forward as COMET projects must be endorsed by the COMET INTERREG Board consisting of 12 elected members from the constituent councils.

1.7 Organisations based within the greater Belfast region e.g. Belfast Metropolitan College can submit their own independent applications. Any applications submitted under the COMET INTERREG banner will be supported and monitored by the COMET INTERREG staff located within Belfast City Council and Belfast City Council will put in place the necessary legal and financial agreements

1.8 **Belfast City Council led Project Ideas**

The following project ideas for Cross Border collaboration have emerged within the COMET region and were submitted on 17th February 2012.

1.9 1. Belfast led, Tourism Marketing project driven by the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau through the Development Department, promoting Belfast as a Tourism Gateway to the North West (Derry/Donegal) i.e. building on the legacies of 2012 and 2013 and providing a strong tourism marketing campaign in Greater Belfast/Derry/Donegal to Great Britain and European markets. Aligns with the Economy theme of the new BCC Investment programme.

1.10 2. Belfast City Council led Employability Through Fitness, led by Parks and Leisure- working with urban sports users in Belfast and Donegal to seek vocational training and skills development to become employable. Aligns with economy theme (support employability and skills development), as well as People, Communities and Neighbourhoods (reduce inequalities and tackle disadvantage) but needs strengthened.

1.11 3. Belfast City Council led Electric Vehicles Project led by Health and Environmental Services which will seek to change behaviour around use of electric vehicles plugged in infrastructure and awareness campaign to reduce carbon emissions and contribute to creating a super cross border electric highway. Aligns to the physical investment programme of the overall Council Investment programme.

1.12 4. Belfast City Council led Giro D' Italia Cycling Event led by the Development Department and supported by the East Border Region, to attract the second largest European Cycling competition to Belfast and Dublin with key tourist related events along the Belfast/Dublin corridor particularly from North Dublin to the border and Belfast (eligible INTERREG area). Aligns to the tourism and events aspects of the Investment Programme Economy theme.

1.13 Other COMET Region Projects

The European Unit (EU) also supports the development and submission of other projects led by the stakeholders in the COMET region namely,

- 1.14 6. An Droichead project focusing on cultural trails, developments and links around Ulster Scots and Irish Language with partners in Belfast, Donegal and Western Scotland.**
- 1.15 7. Coast to coast sailing project led by Carrickfergus Borough Council creating sailing centres of excellence around the Irish sea.**
- 1.16 8. Value Added Sourcing led by Lisburn City Council. This project was rejected under the Enterprise call and now with issues being addressed it will be re submitted and will link with Cavan and Meath County Enterprise Boards to bring companies into export markets.**
- 1.17 9. Compatible Curricula-led by Belfast Metropolitan College- this product will be submitted independently and will seek to encourage students to study 3rd level on the island of Ireland and seek to make IT systems in college's compatible on a cross border basis.**

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the above project ideas submitted under the Interreg IVA call on the 17 February 2012. A report will be brought to council in all due course to advise which projects have successfully passed stage 1 of the appraisal process.**

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 Any successful INTERREG IVA applications will receive 100% funding. Resource implications will be staff time within the named BCC Departments who are leading bids as well as European Unit staff at the development and implementation stages.**
- 3.2 Project bids will have built in delivery resources.**
- 3.3 Future monitoring of the successful projects will be done by the European Unit's INTERREG staff**

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are asked to note and endorse the submission of the above mentioned Belfast City Council led and COMET Interreg IVA submissions.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendation within the report.

Nashville Sister City Initiative - Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware that A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Mayor of Nashville and the Lord Mayor of Belfast in 1994 to promote cultural, tourism and business development opportunities between the two cities. The connection with Nashville has a special significance because of the very strong links between Ulster and the Tennessee capital. The region's connection with Tennessee dates from the Scots-Irish settlement of the area in the eighteenth century to the diverse relationships, cultural and economic ties that link Belfast and Nashville today.**
- 1.2 At a meeting of the Development Committee on 12 May 2010, approval and budget was given to develop the Nashville Sister City relationship and 2010/11 Action Plan and its implementation. Members will also be aware that new partnerships were formed to deliver the Belfast Nashville 2010/11 Action Plan, which was 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. The relationship between the two cities has been greatly strengthened with a focus on achieving maximum economic benefits for Belfast. A considerable number of partner organisations contributed both financially and in kind to sustaining the relationship, including Tourism Ireland, US Consulate, BBC, Queen's University and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Please see Appendix 1 for full details.**

1.3 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.

1.4 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.

1.5 Tourism/Music Tourism

Council 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 to promote Belfast as a vibrant European destination and the gateway to Ireland and Europe. They are currently promoting Titanic Belfast via the Sister Cities network.

1.6 Genealogy

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.

1.7 Creative Industries

Supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, musicians performed showcases and public concerts with high profile singer-songwriters from Nashville. 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. Increased the number of Belfast musicians doing business internationally and resulted in new Management and Publishing deals for the artists.

1.8 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. Please see Appendix 2 for full details.

2 Key Issues

2.1 In light of discussions to develop an International Relations Strategy and position the city's relationship with Nashville within this context as well as other competing priorities in 2011/12 period , the Belfast Nashville Steering Group did not meet in 2011, however partners, in particular Queen's University, have continued to strengthen ties with Sister City Nashville.

2.2 Approval is now sought from Members to review and realign Sister City Nashville objectives to the new Investment Strategy and Development Departmental Plan and to review the current Belfast Nashville Steering Group. It is envisaged that the Nashville Steering Group funding partners would be brought together to input into these discussions.

- 2.3 Council have also been notified that, following an invitation from Titanic Belfast, Mayor Dean of Nashville and a delegation plan to visit in April 2012 to attend the opening celebrations. Further to this, Council has received an invitation from Queen's University to accompany their delegation for an outward visit to Nashville in Autumn 2012. Please see Appendix 3. The purpose of the visit is for Vanderbilt to host a festival of creativity involving writers in the Seamus Heaney Centre and colleagues working in the Creative Arts at Queen's. The showcasing and marketing opportunity would enable Belfast to be profiled in the Southern States as a thriving, vibrant and distinctive city and facilitates Belfast's repositioning as an international tourism destination. It would also provide an opportunity for our Creative Industries, increases the artists ability to do business on a global stage by targeting key international markets, increasing sales and attracting investment. It is recommended that Members await the new International Strategy before decision is taken.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Civic Visit

£1500 towards civic visit in April 2012.

3.2 The proposed visit to Nashville during the Autumn of 2012

Costs per person for a three person delegation for three nights are estimated as follows:

Flights:	£650 - £750
Accommodation:	£300 (mid range hotel)
Advance Subsistence:	£225 (three full days)

4 Recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that Members;

1. Note the contents of this report.
2. To review and realign Sister City Nashville objectives to Belfast City Council's Investment Programme.
3. To review the current Belfast Nashville Steering Group.

4. To approve an inward Civic Visit from Mayor Dean and delegation in April 2012 and to host a reception to include Chair, Deputy Chair and Development Committee, at a cost of no more than £1,500 which has been provided within the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit budget.
5. To accept the invitation from QUB to participate in the Autumn visit to Nashville and agree the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair, or their nominees, and one member of staff.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations within the report.

New York-New Belfast - One City Conferences

(Councillor Ó Muilleoir left the room whilst this matter was under discussion.)

The Committee was advised that the Belfast Media Group would be hosting the third annual New York/New Belfast conference at Fordham University, New York City, from 13th till 14th June. Prior to the New York conference, the Group would be hosting a One City conference, which would take place at various venues in Belfast from 10th till 11th May.

The Head of Economic Initiatives advised the Committee that the theme for the One City conference would be ‘unlocking the potential of a City on the rise’ and that a range of prominent speakers from the business, community and political organisations would deliver addresses at the event. The theme for the New York/New Belfast conference would be ‘building bridges of mutual benefit between Belfast and New York’ and it would be addressed by a range of prominent speakers from the Irish-American community in the United States. It was reported that the Council had been invited to provide a speaker at both conferences to outline the key elements of the Investment Programme for 2012/2015. It was pointed out that, whilst there would be no costs incurred in attending the Belfast leg of the conferences, it was estimated that the cost of authorising an officer from the Council to attend the New York event would be in the region of £1,500, which would include travel and accommodation.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to authorise the attendance at both events by the Director of Development, or his nominee, to deliver a speech on the Council’s Investment Programme and authorised the payment of the associated travel and accommodation costs in connection therewith.

State of the City Debate

The Head of Economic Initiatives provided an overview of the State of the City debates which had taken place during the current financial year and indicated that, with the opening of Titanic Belfast on 31st March, it was an opportune occasion to mark this event by hosting a State of the City debate in conjunction with Titanic Belfast in the City Hall. She pointed out that the debate, which was scheduled to take place on 4th April, would focus on issues pertinent to tourism development and economic regeneration.

Contributors to the debate would include either the Chairman or Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Michael Parkinson, Director of the European Institute of Urban Affairs, and the prominent economic writer, Mr. Julian Dobson. She added that the costs associated with hosting the debate would be in the region of £5,000, provision for which had been made within the State of the City budget.

After discussion, the Committee authorised expenditure in the sum of £5,000 for the holding of the State of the City debate as outlined.

Irish Technology Leadership Group - Memorandum of Understanding

The Committee considered the undernoted report and associated Memorandum of Understanding:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Irish Technology Leadership Group (ITLG) is a group of Irish and Irish American senior executives based in Silicon Valley, California who are active in the global technology industry. They work to promote industry linkages between USA and Ireland through a range of collaborative initiatives including trade visits, award ceremonies and events in both USA and Ireland.**
- 1.2 Over the years there has tended to be an annual visit to Belfast and/or Dublin by (ITLG) Members and Council has been involved to some degree in each of their visits. Most recently they visited Belfast over the MTV Awards weekend in November 2011 to explore opportunities for investment and trade development. Council played a leading role on this occasion in developing a mutually productive itinerary and along with Invest NI organised a tailor made programme for the 6 ITLG representatives. This comprised targeted meetings with local indigenous companies mainly in digital media and design as well as showcasing the new development opportunities in Belfast centred on technology.**
- 1.3 Elected Members met with ITLG during this programme and discussed how to maximise the benefits of a relationship between Belfast as a city and the ITLG on an ongoing basis. The desire for formalising or embedding the relationship grew out of a genuine and deep seated interest from ITLG in investment opportunities in Belfast and from Members identifying the need to draw upon the expertise, talents and goodwill of ITLG. The stated end goal of such a relationship is to secure positive economic impact for Belfast businesses and citizens.**

2 Key Issues

2.1 Memorandum of Understanding

Following extensive follow up with ITLG since November 2011 there is now the opportunity for Council to engage in a partnership arrangement with ITLG in Silicon Valley. ITLG have confirmed that they are eager to sign a formal Memorandum of Understanding with Belfast City Council which will commit both parties to work together on a number of joint initiatives going forward building on the strong foundations laid on their last visit. Contact has been ongoing with the ITLG Director Cian Hughes based in Dublin and with their CEO John Hartnett based in US as well as some other Members of the delegation which visited Belfast. This has led to a draft Memorandum of Understanding being developed as attached as Appendix 1.

2.2 The MOU outlines the key areas of cooperation which could be pursued going forward. Ideally these would comprise both an inward and outward mission each year where companies from both locations would look at opportunities for collaboration in product development, sales and marketing and research and design. Using the expertise of ITLG is also important since the members are leading edge technologists in their field with an interest in Belfast. They have the potential to open doors into international markets for our indigenous companies starting with even the smallest enterprises. It may be appropriate to consider an outward mission later this year focusing on creative companies with potential for hi-tech growth. A formal signing of the MOU and launch in US could also take place during this programme.

2.3 During their time in Belfast, ITLG made it known that they were extremely impressed with the potential of the individuals, working alone or in start up companies, and how they demonstrated real creativity along with commercial acumen. Whilst still in Belfast, ITLG decided to offer an internship for 2 people from Belfast to be based in companies in Silicon Valley for a one year programme. They chose to announce this decision in Argyle Business Centre as part of their itinerary where they met local entrepreneurs from the community. Follow up work has been therefore ongoing on establishing how this would operate in practice.

2.4 To date outline criteria for the internship have been drafted pending further discussion with University of Ulster who already have the template for such a programme in place. Refinement of the criteria and the process for selection is underway. It is likely that candidates will be at postgraduate or Phd level. ITLG will offer a salary for the posts but are seeking additional financial support from Council or other parties to cover ancillary costs to make the internships attractive and affordable. ITLG suggest that costs to be covered include travel and a contribution towards subsistence. The full financial implications to Council will be brought back for consideration when known.

2.5 Innovation Summit

An invitation has been received to attend the ITLG Innovation Summit in San Jose, California on 12 and 13 March. The 5th Annual ITLG Innovation Summit is a two-day gathering of top executives, entrepreneurs, and venture capital investors operating in Ireland and Silicon Valley. Through a programme of keynote presentations, panel debates and top company CEO showcases, attendees get an inside look at the cutting-edge technology, business and political trends shaping the technology sector. The awards also incorporate the Silicon Valley Top 50 awards, presenting an opportunity to meet the top 50 most influential Irish Americans in Silicon Valley. There is also an opportunity to organise individual meetings with key individuals and organisations as part of the visit. Up to 9 trade inward missions are intending to be part of the Summit including Invest NI, University of Ulster. Dublin City Council are also taking out a trade mission and hosting a number of events with San Jose which is their Sister City in USA.

2.6 Invest NI are attending this Summit along with a trade mission comprising 10 companies mainly from Belfast. They would be content for Council to support the mission if desired although obviously there is limited time available now for Council to undertake any additional activity as part of the Summit. Members will wish to consider whether Council should be represented at the Summit in March and/or whether it may be more appropriate to undertake a dedicated external trade mission later in 2012 with a focus specifically on Belfast.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

Costs of attending the ITLG Summit are approx £1600 per person.

Costs attached to the MOU will depend on individual initiatives but top line of £40,000 is likely to be required for the actions outlined in the attached MOU draft.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that Members;

1. approve the draft MOU to advance the relationship with ITLG on a permanent basis.
2. allocate a standing budget of £40,000 to this MOU which would cover the costs of one outward and one inward trade mission along with a contribution to the internship programme and a communications campaign.
3. consider whether it wishes to participate in the Innovation Summit on 12/13 March 2012.

Appendix 1

Memorandum of Understanding between Irish Technology Leadership Group and Belfast City Council

Purpose

This MOU is being established to create a gateway to Silicon Valley for Belfast so that trade and business development opportunities can be capitalised upon by development of an effective partnership arrangement between ITLG and BCC to enhance mutual economic benefit.

This MOU will remain in place for 3 years subject to an annual review.

Objectives

To positively promote Belfast's technology potential on a world stage through ITLG.

To provide small start up and growth companies in the field of technology with business development opportunities.

To increase skills levels and job creation opportunities for Belfast based businesses.

To share resources such as expert knowledge and specialist facilities as required.

To give BCC access to policy guidance and to programme design and delivery advice from ITLG.

To give ITLG access to information on positive regeneration initiatives in Belfast and to showcase trade and investment opportunities arising through indigenous company growth.

Targeted Initiatives

The following sets out the range of specific initiatives to be undertaken through this MOU for 2012-15. For each initiative the outputs, delivery method and approximate cost are included for the first year of the MOU 2012-13.

1. To deliver an annual reciprocal trade mission between ITLG in Silicon Valley and Belfast City Council to promote investment, innovation and education.

<i>Outputs</i>	One outward trade mission led by BCC to Silicon Valley in conjunction with Invest NI where possible with minimum of 10 companies participating. One inward trade mission led by ITLG to Belfast with minimum of 6 companies participating.
<i>Delivery Method</i>	BCC EDU team and ITLG Director of Operations to lead.
<i>Approximate Cost</i>	£30,000

2. To deliver a mutually agreed internship programme for up to 2 individuals from Belfast to be placed with leading technology companies in Silicon Valley.

Outputs 2 places to be secured for selected participants to undertake minimum of one year's work placement inside a Silicon Valley company.

Delivery Method Working with UUJ and Invest NI, BCC EDU team to deliver.

Approximate Cost £5,000

3. To convene an annual symposium on 'Enhancing Belfast's competitiveness' between ITLG Members and BCC Elected Members.

Outputs Shaping of BCC's approach to economic development to be delivered by focused inputs of ITLG Members advising on way forward.

Delivery Method BCC EDU team to deliver. May take place as conference call or as part of a trade mission programme.

Approximate Cost £2,000 approximately

4. To deliver an international promotions campaign in Silicon Valley showcasing Belfast.

Outputs Belfast specific campaign created

Delivery Method BCC EDU team to deliver. Joint approach with Invest NI preferable.

Approximate Cost £3,000

Monitoring & Evaluation

This MOU will be reviewed annually by both parties. The emphasis will be on extent of achievement of the actions outlined. A detailed evaluation framework will be put in place at the outset along with action specific key performance indicators."

After discussion, the Committee agreed to endorse the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the Irish Technology Leadership Group, together with the associated expenditure, subject to the proviso that the Council would, commencing in 2012, undertake bi-annual outward trade missions. In addition, it was noted that the Council would not be represented at the 5th Annual Innovation Summit in San Jose from 12th till 13th March.

Conference Subventions

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that the Integrated Strategic Framework for Belfast Tourism ‘Gateway to the Future’ includes the aim to improve Belfast’s competitiveness by expanding the number of conferences and to maximise opportunities from conferences in order to increase the number, length of stay and spend of business visitors.

1.2 At a meeting of the Development Committee on 15 September 2010, approval was given for a new Conference Subvention Scheme, in partnership with Northern Ireland Tourism Board (NITB) and Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB), to secure and support national and international conferences to Belfast and to build the profile of Belfast as a leading business and conference destination.

1.3 External requests have been made to the Development Committee to support two conferences which are aligned to priorities in the Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework and draft Cultural Framework and whose subject areas relate to specific priority areas for Belfast. Both conferences meet each criteria as stipulated in the Conference Subvention Scheme apart from one: they will not have a minimum of 600 bed nights for out of state delegates staying in Belfast area and are therefore deemed ineligible. However, the two not-for-profit organisations will have an impact on local businesses, will provide opportunities for developing industry/sector links, will enhance Belfast’s international profile and can demonstrate that they will provide economic benefit to the local economy. They also offer the opportunity for Belfast City Council to host and chair bespoke sessions on the itinerary in relation to our recent Frameworks.

2 Key Issues

**2.1 All Ireland International Arts Conference
14-15 June, 2012**

Conference organisers, Theatre Forum Ireland, the Northern Ireland Theatre Association (NITA) and Audiences NI are requesting support from Belfast City Council of £7,000 of a total budget of £54,245.44. The combined return on investment to Belfast will be in the region of £350,000; based on 300 delegates attending.

- 2.2 In previous years Audiences NI, NITA and Theatre Forum Ireland have each individually organised their own annual conferences with considerable success. With support from the Arts Council of NI, this year for the first time the organisations have decided to pool their resources in order to create one conference for the whole arts community on the island of Ireland.
- 2.3 Taking place in the newly redeveloped Lyric Theatre and MAC, the two-day conference will feature high profile speakers from across Ireland, the UK and Europe. The conference theme 'Connections' will present an opportunity for arts practitioners to gather from all corners of the UK and Ireland to meet and learn from each other. 300 arts sector delegates will attend the conference, including artists and key decision makers from theatre, dance and opera companies, festivals and arts centres. As such, the conference will be an opportunity to establish connections between performing arts communities north and south, to share experiences in order to further common purpose and to explore creative collaborative opportunities.
- 2.4 The conference will explore themes of direct relevance to Council's draft Cultural Framework and interest those working within the arts. Themes include:
- Cultural leadership
 - Developing audiences
 - Organisational change
 - Cultural tourism
- 2.5 The aim of the conference is to create legacy from which the partner organisations can work together, to showcase Belfast to delegates unfamiliar with its cultural landscape and to lead to a better connected arts community. The choice of Belfast for the location for the first all-Ireland arts conference builds on the growing perception of Belfast as a cultural hub that continues to demonstrate strong cultural leadership.
- 2.6 Tourism and Events: Opportunities, Impacts and Change; International Conference, Belfast, 20-22 June, 2012

Conference organisers, the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management of the University of Ulster are requesting support from Belfast City Council of £7,500. The combined return on investment to Belfast will be in the region of £400,000; based on 250 delegates attending.

- 2.7 The conference has been planned to coincide with major events that will take place over 2012. This conference will attract an international audience to Belfast and provide the opportunity to showcase the city and Northern Ireland to a global audience that will have major input into how the destination is perceived. The conference will bring together industry and scholars and lead to a more informed understanding of the linkages between tourism and event planning, the challenges that event managers often face and the positive impacts and legacies that tourism events leave in destinations.
- 2.8 The conference is aimed at both industry and academia, providing an open forum in which a wide range of issues linked to tourism and events will be debated, around the following three broad areas of:
- Tourism, event planning and development
 - Event management
 - Impacts and legacies of events
- 2.9 This international conference will attract policy makers, destination managers, public sector managers, researchers, academics and educators across the tourism and event sectors, and private sector tourism and event business operators. Delegates are expected to attend from across all of Ireland, the UK, Europe, North America and Australasia. It is anticipated that 250 delegates will attend the three day event.
- 2.10 This conference is designed with our local tourism and event sector in mind, to illustrate through national and international best practice the value that tourism and events offers individual businesses, communities, and regions. In addition it provides the local industry with a forum in which to network with experts beyond the local and regional scale.
- 2.11 It should be noted that a further conference, National Association of Editors, also failed to meet the level of bed nights in the subvention scheme. However Tourism Ireland has agreed to sponsor this particular event and it has been secured to come to Belfast in November 2012.

Members should be aware that subsidising conferences outside of the subvention scheme is not the norm, however, both these conferences have a strategic link to Council's objectives.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 £14,500 to come from within the Tourism, Culture and Arts budget. The projected return on investment for Belfast is £750,000.**

**All Ireland International Arts Conference: £7,000
Tourism and Events: Opportunities, Impacts and Change:
£7,500**

4 Recommendations

It is recommended that Members;

- 1. Note the contents of this report.**
- 2. Consider whether Committee wishes to support two conferences to the value of £14,500 to come from within the Tourism, Culture and Arts Budget.”**

The Committee agreed to support the two conferences as outlined.

Waterfront Hall - Confex 2012 Press Launch

The Committee was advised that International Confex was an annual forum for practitioners involved in the hospitality, events, conference and convention industry. It was reported that Confex 2012 was due to take place at Excel Exhibition Centre in London from 6th till 8th March.

The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that the recent publication of the Council's Investment Programme, particularly the plans therein for the establishment of exhibition and convention facilities at the Waterfront Hall, had generated widespread interest and she pointed out that Confex 2012 would provide a prime opportunity for the Council to launch its plans to an international audience. That, she added, would be in the form of a formal press launch on Tuesday, 6th March, and she sought authority for the Committee to agree the attendance at the event of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, together with the Director of Development, or their nominees, the cost of which, including travel and accommodation, would be in the region of £600.00 per delegate.

The Committee granted the authority sought.

**Northern Ireland Assembly –
Inquiry into Research and Development**

The Head of Economic Initiatives reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 10th January, it had endorsed a response to the Assembly's Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment's inquiry into developing the local economy through innovation, research and development. She reported that, subsequent to the submission of the Council's response, a request had been received inviting the Council to provide oral evidence at the next stage of the inquiry. Accordingly, she recommended that the Committee authorise the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, together with the Director of Development, or their nominees, to represent the Council at the oral evidence stage of the inquiry.

The Committee agreed that it be represented at the inquiry by the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the Director of Development, or their nominees.

Advice Allocation Review

(Alderman Stoker and Councillors Austin and Keenan left the room whilst this matter was under discussion.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Each year the council provides approximately £826,000 of funding to advice consortia in north, south, east, west and central Belfast under its Advice and Information Services grant programme. This programme supports the consortia to deal with an average of 74,500 enquiries per year across the city.**
- 1.2 The current delivery of the programme is based on review recommendations made in 2005/06 and is partially funded through the Community Support Programme by the Department for Social Development as part of its 'Opening Doors' advice strategy.**
- 1.3 The current programme includes a formula for determining the percentage allocation of funding to the four quadrants and central Belfast. The formula is based on Noble deprivation ranks at Ward level weighted by the population of each area. (The exception is Central which receives a flat 10%). The current allocation is:**

North Belfast:	27.33%
South Belfast:	13.51%
East Belfast:	16.82%
West Belfast:	32.34%
Central:	10.00%

- 1.4 The use of deprivation data is based on guidance to councils from DSD under their advice strategy.
- 1.5 In February 2010 Members requested that the council carry out a review of the existing allocation model and subject any recommendations to an Equality Impact Assessment. Community Services appointed Deloitte to carry out a short independent review. As part of their brief they:
- analysed previous annual returns from each consortia;
 - held discussions with key partners (including consortia members and DSD);
 - updated the formula with the latest demographic and Multiple Deprivation data, and;
 - examined the influence of changes in migrant populations and age profiles across the city.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Based on their analysis Deloitte have produced draft recommendations which identify three options for updating the allocation model. These options are summarised below:

2.2 Option 1 – ‘The status quo’

This is the existing allocation model and is included for comparison purposes only. The option assumes no change in the formula and uses out-of-date deprivation data and 2001 population data based at the ward level in each Parliamentary constituency

- 2.3 This existing allocation formula weighs funding towards those wards that were in the 10% to 30% most deprived wards in the city. ‘Central’ was not included in this calculation and was given a flat 10% based on its role in providing an advice service for anyone in the city who could not avail of the service provided in the four quadrants.

Area	Current Funding %	Funding %	% Change	Funding amount (£)
Central	10.0	10.0	0%	£82,561.93
East Belfast	16.81	16.81	0%	£138,869.17
North Belfast	27.33	27.33	0%	£225,641.77
South Belfast	13.51	13.51	0%	£111,541.17
West Belfast	32.34	32.34	0%	£267,005.29

2.4 Option 3: 'Local focus' model

This option uses the latest deprivation data (MDM 2010) and the most recently available population estimates. The option focuses at the much smaller Super Output Area level (rather than at ward level) – and thus is more sensitive to pockets of deprivation – something which Councillors have voiced particular concerns about.

2.5 As with the previous allocation formula, funding is weighed towards those areas that are in the 10% to 30% most deprived in the city. Again, 'Central' is not included in this calculation and given a flat 10%.

2.6 Outcome for option 3: There is an uplift in funding for north and south Belfast. However, there is a small reduction in funding for both east and west Belfast.

Area	Current Funding %	Under new allocation model	% Change	Funding amount £
Central	10.0	10.0	0%	£82,561.93
East Belfast	16.81	13.4	- 3.4%	£110,550.43
North Belfast	27.33	28.87	+1.54%	£238,356.30
South Belfast	13.51	16.33	+2.82%	£134,823.64
West Belfast	32.34	31.41	-0.93%	£259,327.03

2.7 Option 3 would require the re-distribution of funding within the city and would result in a possible reduction of frontline advice services in two quadrants of the city.

2.8 Option 10: 'Local focus' model (adjusted)

This option uses the same deprivation data (MDM 2010) and the most recent population estimates as Option 3 above. The model also focuses at the much smaller Super Output Area level and thus is more sensitive to pockets of deprivation. As with the previous allocation formula, funding is weighed towards those SOAs that are in the 10% to 30% most deprived in the city. Again, 'Central' is not included in this calculation and given a flat 10%.

2.9 However, this option proposes an additional adjustment to the two areas (east and west Belfast) that lose out from the revised allocation to ensure that no area receives less funding than they did in 2011/2012.

2.10 Outcome for option 10: There is an uplift in funding for north and south Belfast. Funding for east and west Belfast remain the same as the current 2011/2013 allocation.

Area	Current Funding %	Under new allocation Model	% Change/ Proposed action	Funding Amount £
Central	10.0	10.0	Maintain at current funding level	£82,561.93
East Belfast	16.81	13.4	Maintain at current funding level	£138,869.17
North Belfast	27.33	28.87	Rise of 1.54%	£238,356.30
South Belfast	13.51	16.33	Rise of 2.82%	£134,823.64
West Belfast	32.34	31.41	Maintain at current funding level	£267,005.29

2.11 NB. The total for this option (£861,616.33) is £35,996.90 greater than the current budget. Thus this option would require additional funding being secured of approximately £36,000 per year.

A decision is required as to whether this arrangement would be for one or four years. Over a four year period this would require approximately £144,000 to maintain the funding at that level.

2.12 This allocation model has been developed specifically for use in determining the distribution of grant support for generalist advice services and it is not proposed that the formulae can apply to any other community services or council grant stream. This is due to the unique set of circumstances related to the advice grant:

- ensuring local access to generalist advice services for disadvantaged families at Social Output Area Level.
- the consortia model approach as opposed to competitive project application.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 Option 10 would require an additional 4.3% to the overall total budget of £826,000 for the year. This would require a budget of approximately £35,996.90 per year and £144,000 over a four year period.
- 3.2 Funding for the year 2012/13 has been identified in the Development Department Budget. Funding for the years 2013-2016 will be requested as part of the revenue estimates.

4 Equality Implications

- 4.1 The Equality Officer has worked with officers and the consultants to conduct an equality screening for option 10. Members will note that substantial equality data has been gathered and consultation with stakeholders has taken place.
- 4.2 Equality proofing has been completed and equality issues addressed for this option. The screening suggests that the proposed option would have no impact on the Section 75 groups. We thus recommend that the option is screened out and that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.
- 4.3 However, if Members wish to continue to a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) it should be noted that this would require a twelve week public consultation on the option and this would delay the implementation of any chosen model by three months.
- 4.4 As a result the new model could not be implemented in the 2012/13 financial year as the consultation period and subsequent findings would not be concluded by March 2012.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 It is proposed that Members:
- (i) Endorse the findings of the Deloitte review and choose the recommended Option 10: 'Local focus' model (adjusted).

- (ii) **Agree that Option 10 be applied for 3 years (with a review of the option in 2015). Agree that additional funding for the years 2013-2016 would to be allocated from within the Council budget.**
- (iii) **Agree that the option be screened out for equality impact assessment.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Titanic Engagement - Community Chest Grant-Aid Fund

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to seek approval to open a further tranche of funding under the Community Chest grant stream to encourage and support small scale local community activity as a key component of the Titanic Engagement programme.**
- 1.2 **Council is aware that within the broader Community Services grant programme, the service has traditionally had at its disposal the discretion to subsidise specific community activity such as, for example, responding to European ‘themed’ years or local/international events or Seasonal Celebrations, particularly at Christmas etc. The nature of the activities that will be funded will be decided, at any specific time, by the priorities of the Council. However, the emphasis will be on community activities which promote a sense of community spirit and involvement and it is anticipated, that most of the cost of this type of activity should be met through local fund raising, donations or sponsorship.**
- 1.3 **To date £36,057 has been committed to 194 projects in support of seasonal activity at Easter and Christmas 2011. A further £13,790 is available for allocation in 2011/12.**
- 1.4 **Applications for such funding will frequently be confined to groups currently in receipt of community development grant aid (this would include those in receipt of Summer Scheme funding). Limits are set on the total amount of funding available and on the amount of funding available to individual groups and applicants are required to submit a Community Chest application form. The assessment process and subsequent funding administration is resourced by the Community Services staff team.**

2 Key Issues

- 2.1** A key objective of our Titanic Community Engagement Plan is to work through and with key structures within local communities to promote Titanic. The availability of uncommitted funds within the community chest grant stream offers a further opportunity to support local community groups to participate in the sense of celebration and/or commemoration related to the Titanic theme by offering access to small grant support.
- 2.2** If approved, this would complement the planned service activity programme in BCC Community Centres, for example, tea dances, after school programmes, film screenings, etc.
- 2.3** It is therefore proposed that we open the Community Chest funding stream for themed community activity which should take place during late March and throughout April 2012. This tranche would also utilise any identified under spend in the 2011/12 grant budget allowing us to fully draw down the DSD committed funds under the Community Support Plan contract 2011/12. To ensure we have adequate funds, and to accommodate activity in April, officers suggest that up to £10,000 of the community chest allocation for 2012/13 is made available.
- 2.4** Any approved allocation would be managed in line with the Community Chest process whereby there is no open call for application: rather correspondence is issued to all current grant recipients advising them of the opportunity to access small grant support up to the maximum limit.
- 2.5** Correspondence would include a short pro-forma application with details of eligible activity and indicate priority will be given to programmes where the emphasis is on community activities which promote a sense of community spirit and involvement. It will also include details of any related monitoring requirements which would be designed commensurate to the level of grant support.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1** From agreed grant budget stream 2011/12. In line with previous practice, officers would suggest an upper allocation limit of £20,000 based on a maximum grant of £200.

- 3.2 The budget will utilise the identified under spend in the Community Service Grant Programme 2011/12 budget. If this is insufficient, the balance may be met from the agreed 2012/13 community chest allocation (up to a maximum of £10,000).
- 3.3 DSD have not yet advised councils of the level of funding under their Community Support Programme for 2012/13. The draft BCC Community Service Grant Aid Programme 2012/13 has been developed to reflect current support levels and the BCC grant match has been included in the revenue estimates for the Service.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Committee are asked to

- (i) Support the use of a further tranche of the Community Chest grant stream to subsidize specifically themed local community activity aligned to the Titanic Engagement Programme during March and April 2012.**
- (ii) Agree an upper allocation limit of £20,000 based on a maximum individual grant of £200.**
- (iii) Note that application approvals and related payments will be authorised by the Director of Development in accordance with the authority delegated to him."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Support for Sport Funding

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

The Committee considered a schedule of applications received under the Council's Support for Sport Initiative and, after discussion, adopted the recommendations for funding in respect of events which had met the pre-agreed criteria, a copy of which is set out below:

D
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Development Committee,
Tuesday, 21st February, 2012

Pages 496 – 508 Schedule of Applications
can be viewed on Mod.gov Item 6c Appendices 1 and 2

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Development Committee,
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**Development Committee,
Tuesday, 21st February, 2012**

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Development Committee,
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**Consultation Response - Building an Active
Travel future for Northern Ireland**

(Mr. K. Sutherland, Policy and Transport Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was advised that the Department for Regional Development had published for consultation an Active Travel Strategy for Northern Ireland entitled 'Building an Active Travel Future for Northern Ireland'. It was reported that the principal aim of the Strategy was to support and encourage sustainable and environmentally friendly modes of transport, such as walking and cycling. The Strategy sought to build upon programmes which had been established such as the 'Safer Routes to Schools Programme' and car-sharing schemes.

After discussion, during which the Committee noted that a report in respect of future funding opportunities available under the Active Travel Demonstration project would be submitted in due course, and agreed to receive a presentation in respect of the 'Belfast on the Move' proposals, the Members endorsed the undernoted Council response to the consultation, subject to the following amendments:

- that it be strengthened to emphasise the Council's view that the Department for Regional Development must address the issue of vehicle speed limits to enhance the safety of cyclists;
- that planners should be mindful of the requirements of cyclists and pedestrians in all developments;
- that significant funding must be allocated towards the establishment of dedicated cycle lanes and specialised routes for cyclists; and
- that workplaces should be encouraged to provide facilities for cyclists, such as showers and parking bays.

Response

'Building An Active Travel Future for Northern Ireland'

Q1. What are your views about the draft Active Travel Vision?

The Council welcomes the draft Active Travel vision which supports the Council's Transport Policy aspirations that seek to "influence the development of transportation policies and proposals which improve connectivity and encourage modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport".

There is a need to ensure that walking and cycling can make an appropriate contribution towards transportation across Northern Ireland and the commitment to place it at the heart of local transport, public health and other government strategies and policies is strongly supported by the Council.

The Council assume that the principal drivers for delivering this commitment will continue to be the Regional Development and Transportation Strategies. By way of example, the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland 2025 introduced Strategic Planning Guideline TRAN 4 with the objective of changing the regional travel culture and contributing to healthier lifestyles. Specifically, the RDS identifies a major transport challenge, in all parts of Northern Ireland and amongst all age groups, of reviving healthy habits of walking and cycling, particularly for relatively short journeys of less than two miles. The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) goes beyond this statement by identifying that walking constitutes the first and last stage of almost all journeys and is an important travel alternative in its own right to bus or car in urban areas. In addition, the RTS highlights that cycling and walking networks can be created that will be well-used, safe and enjoyable, and which will contribute to a healthy lifestyle and give access to services and transport interchanges.

The Council would be concerned that relatively little progress has been made in encouraging significant and sustained levels of modal shift towards active travel modes across Northern Ireland, particularly when compared to levels achieved in other regions of the United Kingdom and given the relatively high proportion of local journeys of 5 miles or less. Unfortunately, the 'Regional Transportation Strategy 2011 - A Sustainable Transport Future Public Consultation Document' confirms that although there has been some increase in the number of people walking in Belfast, the trend across the region is downward. Also, uptake data for cycling indicates that although the 2002 RTS had aimed for a 100% increase in cycling by 2005 and a 400% increase by 2015, the actual recorded increase was 56.7% in 2008. As this data has been expressed in percentage form, it is not immediately clear how this data translates into actual trip numbers.

The new Active Travel Strategy for Northern Ireland states that targets for improving active travel in Northern Ireland are long-term and aspirational with key objectives of increasing walking and cycling distance and increasing the percentage of cycling journeys. It is recommended that if the Department intends to deliver on its vision for the Strategy, then objectives need to be formed around relevant performance criteria and underpinned by appropriate levels of investment, promotion and communication. Furthermore, it is recommended that those organisations that have a role in delivering the active travel vision for Northern Ireland should have their responsibilities clearly outlined so as they can contribute appropriately to the process.

Q2. Given the low numbers of people currently walking and cycling in Northern Ireland, what contribution do you believe an active travel strategy can make to increasing those numbers?

The Council recommends the active travel strategy sets ambitious targets for a growth in walking and cycling and a clear action plan to ensure they are met. The strategy should outline clear roles of other government departments and other partners. The Department should seek to secure investment at a realistic level to meet the target levels

The Council also considers that to make an appropriate contribution to increasing numbers of walking and cycling, the Northern Ireland Strategy and associated Action Plan should seek to mirror successful initiatives that have already been introduced in Great Britain, supported by appropriate financial resources that are deployed on an invest to save basis.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has provided detailed information regarding the activities that it has undertaken in order to reduce congestion, improve local environments and encourage healthier and safer lifestyles in Great Britain. Although many of these initiatives form part of a broader cross-government agenda for creating safer, greener communities, the Department's actions for fostering greater levels of cycling nonetheless include cycle safety, and maintenance training, cycle to work schemes for employees and cycle route planning. In addition, the Secretary for State for Transport has announced the introduction of a Local Sustainable Transport Fund in the order of £560 million covering the period 2011-2015. Projects eligible for funding include measures to promote walking and cycling, encourage modal shift, manage effectively demands on the road network, secure better traffic management, improve road safety and improve access and mobility for local communities. The fund also supports Bikeability training in each of the project years and the following projects in the first year in order to maintain momentum on sustainable travel whilst local authorities prepare their proposals: £13 million for Links to Schools, Bike Club and walking to school initiatives; £1 million for the Transport Direct cycle journey planner; and £250,000 to take forward business to business initiatives on alternatives to car-based travel. In addition, DfT is supporting the development of travel plans by employers which can include car sharing schemes, a commitment to improve cycling facilities, dedicated bus services or restricted car parking allocations and flexible-working practices such as remote access and video conferencing.

Smarter choices are techniques for influencing peoples' travel behaviour towards more sustainable options such as encouraging school, workplace and individualised travel planning. The 'Effects of Smarter Choice Programmes in the Sustainable Travel Towns Summary Report' indicates that, as a result of the initiative, car trips reduced and trips by more sustainable modes increased as follows: bus trips per person grew substantially by 10%~22%, the number of cycle trips per head grew substantially by 26%~30 and the number of walking trips per head grew substantially, by 10%~13%, compared to a national decline in similar towns.

In quantifying the success of this Smarter Choices programme, DfT concluded that the implied benefit-cost ratio of the achieved outcome, allowing only for congestion effects, is in the order of 4.5. Including environmental, consumer-benefit and wider health effects, recent Department for Transport modelling suggests that the overall benefit-cost ratio could be as high as 9.0.

Q3. What do you see as the most important benefits of active travel at both an individual and collective level?

The Council considers that a wide range of benefits arise from active travel in terms of economic, social, health and environmental benefits. The consequences of excessive car use and dependency are evident in urban areas in terms of congestion, community severance and poor air quality. An improved travel system for Belfast based on sustainable principles is a key priority for the Council and supports a number of the Council corporate plan strategic themes in particular "better care for Belfast's environment – a clean, green city now and for the future".

The Council also considers the promotion of active travel in Belfast could support sustainable economic development and improve access to jobs and services to all by offering a safe and reliable choice through walking and cycling. A recent survey indicated that 43% of households in Belfast do not have access to a car therefore are dependent on other means of transport.

From health and environment specific perspectives, Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 places a duty upon district councils to periodically review and assess air quality within their districts. Where the outcome of a review and assessment identifies that either European or national health-based or environmental air quality standards are not, or are unlikely to be achieved, then the local authority is required to declare an Air Quality Management Area and develop a supporting Air Quality Action Plan in collaboration with relevant authorities in pursuit of the standards. Relevant authorities are prescribed in the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 and these Regulations also require Northern Ireland departments to ensure that levels of air pollution do not exceed European air quality standards.

Belfast City Council has already declared four Air Quality Management Areas for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter across the city, associated principally with road transport emissions. In 2006, the Council published an Air Quality Action Plan for the city, which comprised substantially actions provided by the Department for Regional Development and its Agencies. These actions included walking and cycling initiatives, intended to encourage members of the public to consider either walking or cycling instead of using their car. Unfortunately, the Air Quality Action Plan has failed to deliver the required air quality improvements in all parts of the city and consequently, DoE NI and Defra have recently jointly applied to the European Commission for a 5 year time extension for achieving the limit values for nitrogen dioxide across the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area. If this application is accepted by the Commission, then the limit values for nitrogen dioxide must be achieved by 1 January 2015 and maintained thereafter.

In Belfast, elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide air pollution tend to be associated with congested or slow moving road traffic and consequently, the introduction of an Active Travel Strategy has the potential to contribute directly towards improving air quality and correspondingly, the lives of all residents of the city and, in particular, those persons living within the Air Quality Management Areas. For this reason, the Council would welcome the opportunity to continue to work closely with the Department in order to characterise the beneficial impacts of the Active Travel Strategy upon local air quality and to integrate relevant measures within the updated Air Quality Action Plan.

Q4. What do you consider to be the main barriers to a higher level of active travel in Northern Ireland?

Prior to introducing its cycle to work scheme, Belfast City Council conducted a limited staff survey in order to assess employees' attitudes towards walking and cycling. In common with other large employers, the survey revealed that the majority of staff travel to work by car, either as a driver or passenger. However, a substantial number of employees indicated that they would be prepared to consider walking and cycling as alternatives to the private car. When asked about barriers to cycling, employees indicated that improved cycling routes and better cycling facilities were the key barriers to cycling whereas the capacity for walking tended to be determined by how far the employee lived from their workplace, although it is accepted that walking can form a component of multi-modal journeys.

However, there are several other levers to consider in encouraging greater levels of walking and cycling including for example the Department's parking policy for the Belfast City centre. The Road Service 'Belfast City Centre Car Parking' leaflet indicates that the Roads Service provides over 2,100 parking spaces within approximately 10 minutes walking time of the city centre. It is unclear whether this substantial number of parking spaces conveys an appropriate message regarding the need to consider alternatives to the private car.

Moreover, the Planning Service has published Parking Standards for residential and other developments related to the provisions of Planning Policy Statement 3 on Access, Movement and Parking. Essentially, the Standards require that developers demonstrate there is adequate provision of space within a site, for parking, manoeuvring, loading and unloading to fulfil the operational requirements of the proposed development although they also require that secure cycle parking is provided as an integral part of new development.

By way of amplification, the Standards specify the total number of parking spaces per dwelling required for apartments and houses that have only communal parking provision must range from 1.25 unassigned parking spaces for apartments with 1 bed to 2 parking spaces for a terraced house with 3 beds. For parking spaces per dwelling required for houses that have in-curtilage parking provision, this can range from 1.75 parking spaces for a 1 bed terrace house to 4.5 parking spaces for 5 bed detached house. As previously, it is unclear whether standards of this nature are aligned to the aspirations of the Active Travel Strategy or contribute meaningfully towards the achievement of its objectives.

Therefore, in conclusion, the Council consider it important that the Strategy is placed at the heart of local transport, public health and well-being and wider government strategies for the benefit of society, the environment and the economy as a whole.

Q5. Do you consider individual attitudes to active travel to be a greater barrier or a lack of adequate infrastructure?

The Council considers the creation of safe, attractive walking and cycling conditions, with coherent high quality networks linking all everyday destinations, so that walking and cycling are faster and more convenient than car travel is essential for the city.

It is considered that a lack of adequate infrastructure closely coupled to personal safety issues have been the primary barriers to the uptake of active travel in Belfast, although these issues are beginning to be addressed for the city through Department for Regional Development infrastructure initiatives such as Belfast on the Move. The infrastructure position is confirmed broadly by the Department for Transport Local Transport Note 2/08 on Cycle Infrastructure Design, which states that the road network is the most basic and important cycling facility available, and the preferred way of providing for cyclists is to create conditions on the carriageway where cyclists are content to use it, particularly in urban areas, accepting that some cyclists are more able and willing to mix with motor traffic than others. In relation to cyclists' safety, the Transport Note recommends that traffic volumes and speeds should be reduced where possible to create safer conditions for cycling and walking. Also, opportunities for redistributing space within the highway should be explored, including moving kerb lines and street furniture, providing right turn refuges for cyclists and separating conflicting movements by using traffic signals. Surface defects should not be allowed to develop to the extent that they become a hazard, and the potential for conflict between pedestrians and cyclists should be minimised. Although there is provision for recreational cycling within some of the council's parks, it is noted that the National Cycle Network within Belfast is restricted to Route 99 which follows the Comber Greenway, Route 9 from Lisburn City to Belfast City Centre and Route 93 from Belfast towards Newtownabbey. Accordingly, travelling by bike across other parts of the city necessitates utilising a mixture of off and on road cycle tracks and bus/cycle lanes. Walking across the city also necessitates traversing some significant arterial roads.

Q6. What evidence could you provide in support of your views?

As part of the development of its 2006 Air Quality Action Plan, Belfast City Council undertook a Health Impact Assessment of the Action Plan proposals. When questioned, residents living in the vicinity of the Air Quality Management Areas indicated that offering or providing safety training for both cyclists and motorists would encourage greater levels of cycling. Residents commented also that developing both dedicated and integrated cycle routes that are safe and provide appropriate facilities would also serve as a means of encouraging people to cycle.

As mentioned previously, Belfast City Council conducted a limited staff survey in order to assess employees' attitudes towards walking and cycling. When asked about barriers to cycling, employees indicated that improved cycling routes and better cycling facilities were the key barriers to cycling whereas the capacity for walking tended to be determined by how far the employee lived from their workplace, although it is accepted that walking can form a component of multi-modal journeys.

Q7. What are the main challenges facing us in encouraging and facilitating an increase in active travel in Northern Ireland?

The Council considers that the main challenge in encouraging and facilitating an increase in active travel is to transform the attitude and choice of those commuters that automatically choose to use their car irrespective of the distance, duration or function of their journey. In essence, it is important to understand why people do not walk and cycle anymore. It is accepted, however, that encouraging sustained modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport will be difficult, since having purchased, taxed and insured a vehicle, it is challenging to encourage commuters to choose public transport combined with walking and cycling as an alternative. Moreover, sustainable forms of transport will not be able to replace the private car in all situations and therefore, a car will still be required by the majority of commuters.

Personal safety is also a key consideration and therefore, it is important that the built environment is constructed in a manner which supports walking and cycling. Unfortunately, in the urban environment, many streets and urban spaces have been given over to road traffic, at the expense of pedestrians and cyclists. Actions need to be taken to restore the balance in order for town centres to prosper. Accordingly, actions for walking and cycling need to be articulated in planning policy guidance and supported by appropriate enforcement by the Planners.

Successive European mobility management projects such as Civitas also emphasise the need to influence travel behaviour through mobility management, which includes marketing, communication, education and information campaigns. It is considered that campaigns of this nature could serve to begin to reorient Northern Ireland commuter attitudes.

The council would suggest a health check on every transport and land use decision focusing on the potential impact on levels of walking and cycling and other aspects of health. A decision should then be taken to invest public money to the benefit of public health, and reject proposals whose impact on walking and cycling will not be positive.

There is also need to tackle poor practice for car drivers in relation to cyclists and pedestrians; through improved driver training and awareness campaigns this could be addressed. Cyclist proficiency training is also necessary.

Q8. What objectives would you suggest are most important in an active travel programme?

Given the greater travel range available to those who cycle, it is considered that increasing the percentage of journeys undertaken by bicycle should be the primary objective for the active travel strategy. Annual cycle distance is also a useful metric, however, this statistic can be distorted by commuters undertaking longer but not necessarily more frequent journeys. Other activity data that could prove useful in informing the objectives of the Strategy include trip modal share for car travel, public transport and walking and cycling, and car driver, bus, cycle and walking trips per commuter. Monitoring levels of cycle ownership, attitudes towards walking and cycling and accident levels could also help to inform the focus of promotional initiatives.

Q9. How would you prioritise these objectives?

It is considered that Strategy objectives do not need to be prioritised; rather projects and measures that are likely to form components of the supporting Action Plan should be prioritised on the basis of cost, impact and timescale.

Q10. Do you agree with the concept of encouraging active travel demonstration projects? If so, what do you think they should focus on?

The Council considers that active travel demonstration projects are extremely useful in establishing that modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport can be effected and maintained. Also, the views and perspectives of those who have participated in pilot or demonstration projects are invaluable in encouraging others that active travel is both beneficial and practicable.

The Department's Travelwise Unit should seek to extend its initiatives around walking and cycling to school and encouraging greater levels of car sharing. In addition, cycle proficiency and cycle maintenance training could be provided to the wider community in order to encourage them back into cycling. It is suggested that personal travel planning programmes and travel awareness campaigns could be trialled alongside engagement with key destinations, to include significant employers, in order to promote walking and cycling.

Q11. How important do you think adopting a cross-sectoral approach is?

The Council considers essential that Active Travel initiatives are underpinned by cross-sectoral support and actions. The action plan should outline clear roles of other government departments and other partners.

A cursory review of central government Departments suggests that the Department for Regional Development, Department of Environment, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister all have fundamental roles to play in promoting and delivering active travel. Moreover, although local authorities do not have a statutory role in transport planning, a range of councils have been involved in helping to develop the draft Active Travel Strategy along with the invitation to local councils to take the lead in developing bids to put in place active travel demonstration projects. As indicated in our response to Question 3, we would welcome the opportunity to reflect the impact of any Belfast focused projects within an updated Air Quality Action Plan.

Q12. What specific actions would you like to see in an action plan?

The Council would suggest the following initiatives for consideration in the action plan:

- active travel demonstration projects that promote modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport can be effected and maintained;
- initiatives around walking and cycling to school and encouraging greater levels of car sharing;
- cycle proficiency and cycle maintenance training could be provided to the wider community in order to encourage them back into cycling;
- personal travel planning programmes; and
- travel awareness campaigns could be trialled alongside engagement with key destinations, to include significant employers, in order to promote walking and cycling.

Q13. What ideas do you have on monitoring progress on the strategy? What information could you provide that would help to do this?

The Council consider that increasing the percentage of journeys undertaken by bicycle should be the primary tool for monitoring the active travel strategy. Other activity data that could prove useful in informing the objectives of the Strategy include trip modal share for car travel, public transport and walking and cycling, and car driver, bus, cycle and walking trips per commuter. Monitoring levels of cycle ownership, increases in cycle lane and supporting infrastructure provision, introduction of workplace and school travel plans, attitudes towards walking and cycling and accident levels could also provide useful monitoring tools.

Q14. How would the success of these actions be evaluated?

As the strategy is given to have an operational lifespan until 2020, it is suggested that performance data for individual projects should be collated and reviewed periodically throughout this period. This approach will enable the Department robustly to determine progress towards its stated objectives and to identify those projects that are not delivering in the manner anticipated. In addition, the Council will work with the Department to better understand the beneficial impacts of the Active Travel Strategy upon local air quality.”

Chairman