

# Development Committee

Tuesday, 12th June, 2012

## MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- Members present: Aldermen Ekin and Stoker;  
Councillors Austin, Hartley, Hendron,  
Kelly, Kingston, Kyle, Hussey, Maskey, McKee,  
McVeigh, Reynolds, Spence and Webb.
- In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;  
Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives;  
Ms. C. Taggart, Community Development Manager; and  
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Chairing of Meeting**

In the absence of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, it was

Resolved – That Councillor Maskey take the Chair.

(Councillor Maskey in the Chair.)

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported from the Chairman (Alderman Stalford), the Deputy Chairman (Councillor Ó Muilleoir) and Councillor Mac Giolla Mhín.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of 8th and 22nd May were taken and read as signed and correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st June.

### **Declaration of Interest**

In respect of item 8 viz., Donegall Pass Community Centre, Alderman Stoker indicated that he was a member of the centre's management committee.

### **Requests for Deputations**

It was reported that a request to address the Committee had been received from representatives of Belfast City Bikes Tours. The Democratic Services Officer reminded the Members that the Council had, under the Department for Regional Development's Active Travel Scheme, applied for funding to enable the establishment of a Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme and, as such, it would be useful for the Committee to be provided with an overview of the operation of private bike tours in the City.

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation in this regard at a future meeting.

### Routine Matters

#### Parking Initiatives in Belfast

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 17th April, it had endorsed the Council's Retail Support Plan for 2012/2013 and agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Minister with responsibility for the Department for Regional Development requesting that consideration be given to addressing shoppers' parking needs by introducing a range of initiatives in arterial routes and the City centre.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that a response had been received on behalf of the Minister which had outlined the range of schemes which had been introduced by the Department in this regard. The correspondence had indicated also that officials from the Roads Service would be prepared to attend a future meeting of the Committee to consider Members' suggestions in relation to parking initiatives and respond formally in due course.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to invite the representatives of the Roads Service to attend a future meeting.

#### 'The Pipes are Calling' Event

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd May, it had deferred consideration of a report in respect of a request from Co-operation Ireland for financial support in the sum of £25,000 to assist in the staging of an event entitled 'The Pipes are Calling', which was scheduled to take place at the Odyssey Complex in September. It had been noted that the deferral would enable further information to be obtained regarding the draft programme for the event and clarification on the level of financial contributions which had been committed by other bodies and agencies in relation thereto.

The Democratic Services Officer reported that Co-operation Ireland had, given the limited timescale for organising and staging the event, since indicated that 'The Pipes are Calling' would be postponed until 2013.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that any further requests for assistance towards the hosting of the event would, in the first instance, be referred for consideration under the various grants' programmes being delivered by the Department's Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit.

#### Presentation on Digital TV Switchover

Pursuant to the Committee's decision of 22nd May, the Members received a presentation from Mr. D. Wolinski, Mr. R. Keene and Mr. N. Tilson, representatives of Digital UK, which provided an overview on the arrangements which had been put in place to ensure that the changes to television services in Belfast arising from the Digital Switchover would be implemented successfully in October, 2012.

Noted.

### **Management of Committee Business**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th June, 2011, it had agreed, given the amount of business which it was required to consider, that it would meet twice-monthly, with a commencement time of 5.15 p.m. The Democratic Services Officer pointed out that, since that decision had been taken, the number of reports considered at meetings had reduced and that a significant number of decisions had been taken by the Committee without the need for debate. Accordingly, he suggested that, in view of the time constraints faced by Members, the Committee might wish to consider holding in future one meeting per month.

Members expressed conflicting views in respect of the suggestion that the Committee might revert back to one meeting a month. A Member stated that a second meeting afforded Members a greater opportunity to review and scrutinise the work of the Department. However, other Members pointed out that there existed a greater consensus amongst Members on a range of issues which had previously been the cause of debate and, as such, it was feasible to suggest that the business could be conducted in one meeting.

After further discussion, the Committee agreed to continue to meet on a twice-monthly basis, at a commencement time of 5.15 p.m., subject to a further review in late-2012.

### **State of the City Debates**

The Director provided an overview of the debates which had been hosted by the Council during 2011/2012 as part of the State of the City initiative. He reviewed the benefits which had accrued in hosting the events and proposed that the Committee authorise the holding of four further debates in 2012/2013, an overview on which is set out hereunder:

#### **City Centre Development**

The Director outlined the achievements of the regeneration consultants Urban Pollinators, particularly in respect of its place-making knowledge and its work on the Mary Portas' Review of High Streets. He suggested that it would be prudent to invite Mr. Julian Dobson, Director of Urban Pollinators, to speak at a debate which would enable him to impart his experience on how to deliver meaningful City-centre regeneration projects, particularly within the context of the Council's Investment Programme.

#### **Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas (JESSICA)**

The Committee was apprised of the work of the above-mentioned initiative which was overseen by the European Commission and which had been developed in co-operation with the European Investment Bank and the Council of Europe Development Bank.

It was reported that the initiative provided support towards sustainable urban development and regeneration through innovative financial mechanisms.

The Director indicated that it would be beneficial to invite representatives from cities, such as Liverpool and Manchester, or programmes, such as the Scottish-based Amber Green Consortium, which had benefitted through the initiative, to contribute to a debate on the programme. Such a debate he pointed out would enable Members to assess the viability of the initiative in assisting future Council-led regeneration in the City.

### **Belfast Masterplan**

The Director reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 21st February, it had agreed that consultation on the Council's Draft Masterplan would be carried over two phases. The Director pointed out that, on completion of the consultation process, it would be beneficial to launch formally the Masterplan as part of the State of the City initiative. He indicated that a debate could be held which could consider the Masterplan in the wider context of the regeneration of the City.

### **Community Planning and the Investment Programme**

The Director outlined the benefits which could be accrued by hosting a debate which would examine the issue of community planning within the context of the Investment Programme. He outlined the range of groups which could be invited to partake in the debate which would consider issues associated with the Council assuming responsibility for community planning matters under the Review of Public Administration.

During discussion, Members made the point that it would be necessary for the Council to ensure that measurable benefits would be achieved in the holding of the debates. It was suggested that invitations could be forwarded to a wider range of bodies, with particular emphasis on representatives of the community and voluntary sectors and that the issue of deprivation and need across the City should be integral to the debates.

After further discussion, the Committee endorsed the holding of the four State of the City debates as outlined by the Director, subject to consideration of the Members' comments in relation thereto.

### **Connect G Project - Partner Request**

(Ms. P. Morrow, COMET INTERREG Programme Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 **Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 **The Council has been approached by Canan, the lead partner in an application for INTERREG IVA funding for a project called Connect G. This project has been shortlisted for**

funding and Canan is seeking additional partners for the project. The project value is £1.175 million and will run from late 2012 to March 2015.

- 1.2 The purpose of Connect G is to improve the effectiveness of public agency service support for Gaelic language enterprise schemes through greater collaboration among a range of agencies.
- 1.3 The overall aim of the project is to improve the effectiveness of public agencies in their support of Gaelic enterprises. This approach will be tested through a number of pilot projects, the results of which will inform the development of a shared strategy and a plan as to how agencies will collaborate in the future to support the growth of enterprises post project, in particular it will assist:
  - In developing, or have the potential to develop, Irish or Scottish Gaelic or cultural products or services; and
  - Projects using, or have the potential to use, Irish or Scottish Gaelic for marketing or branding.
- 1.4 The project will be delivered across the Irish border region, Northern Ireland and Belfast, together with western Scotland and the Western Isles. It will seek to pilot and evaluate the effectiveness of different types of service interventions and collaborations in support of Gaelic enterprises. The result of these evaluations will form the basis of a shared strategy and action plan for future collaboration. The main aims of the project will be to 'raise ambition', provide skills to meet objectives and to set out proposals on how such aims can be achieved. Accordingly, two pilot studies have been identified, viz.:

1. Sectoral Approach

This will pilot activity in support of three key sectors of Gaelic enterprise which the agencies consider to have potential for growth. These are in media, both – interactive and broadcast - cultural tourism and social enterprise. The support of each of the sectors will be overseen by a specific working group comprising of key agencies responsible for development this sector within INTERREG, thus ensuring that the project and its activities genuinely address the sector's needs.

## **2. Generic Approach**

This will address 'incubation centres' within the INTERREG area and provide opportunities to establish 'clusters' which are currently underutilised, possibly due to the lack of full support services which would assist in transforming infrastructure into a business growth unit. This project will seek to provide some of these services online and through face-to-face activities focussed on Gaelic enterprises. It will promote existing serviced space including that owned by some partners, which would be appropriate to Gaelic enterprise, such as, online support services, such as 'The Gallery' and 'Inspire Videos', together with addressing learning resources and mentoring support.

### **Delivery Plan**

The project will be delivered through a management arrangement consisting of a steering group, working groups and project staff. The steering group will comprise representatives of the following organizations viz., Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Cànan, Foras na Gaeilge, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Carntogher Community Association, Magherafelt District Council, Belfast City Council and An Cultúrlann, Belfast. These organisations will provide governance, ensuring that plans are met and providing advice and guidance for staff. The steering group will meet, through face-to-face meetings or by utilising video conferencing.

Representatives from the relevant government departments from each jurisdiction will be invited to attend steering group meetings, that being, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Gaelic and Scots Unit in Scotland, and Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in the Republic of Ireland.

### **1.5 Sectoral Working Groups**

The sectoral pilot projects will be supported by a working group comprising of experts with responsibility for delivery within INTERREG. These meetings will be held using Skype, teleconferencing and video conference.

### Staffing

The project will be staffed by four individuals with each having responsibility for all three jurisdictions. The Project Director will be based at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Isle of Skye, and will be responsible for project direction and implementation, staffing, liaising with the steering group, governance and communication.

A Marketing and Communications Manager will be based at An Cultúrlann in Belfast and will be responsible for marketing, communications, website content development, training with businesses and other related projects. A Training and Skills Manager will be based at Udaras na Gaeltachta in Co. Donegal and will be responsible for management of course activity, mentoring, development of training resources for the website. The Administration and Finance Officer will be based at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Isle of Skye and will carry out a full range of duties associated with financial matters and administrative procedures.

## **2** Key Issues

- 2.1 Should the Council agree to partake in the project, it will be required to sit on the steering group in a governance role to ensure that agreed plans are delivered and to provide advice and guidance to the staff. The time requirement would vary in accordance with the format of, and venue for, the meetings.

It is envisaged that the first face-to-face will be in Skye in February 2013. This would probably require two or three days – including travel. The second will be in Belfast and will coincide with the project launch April 2013. The third will be in Gweedore requiring at least one day including travel time. The location of the fourth face-to-face has not as yet been decided upon, but maximum time requirement would be 2 or 3 working days. All travel costs will be paid by the project and there's a budget of £60 per person per video conference to pay for video conferencing costs.

At present, resource demands are high on Council departments to deliver plans and funded projects and the involvement in this project would require the allocation of an officer from the Economic Development Unit. This will involve Officer time, cost of which is not covered by the project funding and therefore would be in addition to their normal duties. Travel costs for the officer attending steering

group meeting are also not covered. It is anticipated that an Elected Member will be required to sit on the steering group. Capacity to deliver what is required in terms of providing a governance role, agreeing plans and providing advice and guidance to the staff must be considered.

- 2.3 In addition, this project may raise an expectation that there will be money available beyond for continued activity. However, since it is a pilot project, the impact for businesses may be limited.

### 3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 Whilst there is no financial cost for involvement as a partner in this project, there would be officer time required which is not covered by funding and travel and subsistence costs for an officer to accompany the Elected Member who would represent the Council on steering committee.

### 4 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are asked to endorse one of the following options:

- That the Council agrees to be a 'full partner' in the project;
- That the Council agreed be a 'partner' in an observational capacity; or
- That the Council does not participate in this project."

The COMET INTERREG Programme Manager answered a range on Members' queries in respect of the report. She indicated that a business plan regarding the project had been received the previous day which had clarified the extent to which the Council would be required to provide support should it agree to become a full partner, which she indicated was minimal. In addition, she pointed out that there would not now be a requirement for the Council to nominate a Member to sit on the steering committee for the project.

A Member expressed concern regarding the level of direct benefit which the Council would accrue should it partake in the project. A further Member pointed out that, should the Council agree to become a full partner, there could be legal implications associated with the delivery of the project and it would be necessary that such matters were clarified before a decision could be made. It was suggested that the report contained a level of ambiguity regarding the Council's future role and that a precedent would be set which could encourage other organisations to seek the Council's support for similar-type projects.

A further Member referred to the fact that the project sought to promote the use of the Irish language and Scots Gaelic and indicated that this should not be relevant to the

decision which the Committee was being requested to make. He stated that the Members should consider the request purely on the basis of its potential to deliver economic benefit.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Stoker,  
Seconded by Councillor McKee,

That the Committee agrees not to become a partner in the Connect G Project.

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

#### **Further Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Webb,  
Seconded by Councillor Hartley,

That the Committee agrees to become a partner in the Connect G Project, subject to the project receiving a positive economic appraisal.

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

#### **Donegall Pass Community Centre – Management Arrangements**

(Alderman Stoker left the room whilst this item was under discussion.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 Donegall Pass Community Centre was constructed in 2001 in direct response to community need in the area. The centre has been accessed by the local community providing much needed services since that time.**
- 1.2 Council support for the community centre was approved by the Community and Leisure Sub-Committee at its meeting on 12th March 1996. It was agreed that Council would part fund the construction of the centre together with associated running costs. The total capital cost being £244,500: 75% of which was funded by ‘Making Belfast Work’.**
- 1.3 Under the original terms of the development the responsibility of managing the centre was undertaken by Council. However this was viewed as a short term measure with the ultimate aim of transferring the management of the centre to the**

community. Therefore at the meeting of the Community and Leisure Sub-Committee in August 2000, it was agreed that a provision be made within the revenue estimates to enable the centre to operate as a full time directly managed facility for a period of two years with a view to building local capacity to adopt the local community management model at the end of an agreed period. This arrangement was further extended at the meeting of the Sub-Committee of 7th January 2003 and again in 2007 on the basis that both the local community and Council officers felt the capacity had not been adequately developed to support local independent management arrangements.

- 1.4 Donegall Pass Community Forum (DPCF) developed an area master plan in 2009 for the Donegall Pass area. The community centre is considered to be a vital part of the master plan which will enable the strengthening of community infrastructure and facilities. Within this context officers met with representatives of the DPCF in order to assess the potential of the Forum to assume management responsibilities for the centre. The outcome of this being that the DPCF, with support from Council, undertook a full economic business plan (2010). This included stakeholder consultation, extensive desktop research and benchmarking analysis. The study considered a range of options for the management of the centre and associated risk.
- 1.5 The Development Committee at its meeting on 11th May 2011 agreed to the request from the DPCF to 'seek to explore the possibility with Council of conducting a period of transition (1 year) which would allow it to fully examine the practicalities of assuming the management of the Centre successfully'.
- 1.6 The Development Committee at its meeting on 14th September 2011 authorised a request from DPCF to extend the transition period for a further six months.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The DPCF has now concluded the transition period which involved: members of the DPCF shadowing Council staff at Donegall Pass Community Centre; site visits by DPCF to other community managed facilities; and transfer of policy/procedures/centre budget and all relevant information to DPCF.
- 2.2 DPCF has informed Council that 'transfer of the Donegall Pass Community Centre to a locally based organisation is in the

interests of the community it serves.’ However it is the Forums view that before entering into agreement with Council to undertake management of the facility a number of outstanding issues need to be addressed. These issues relate to income and expenditure (current and potential), programming of local services, and the current design of the building and possible adaption to meet the needs of DPCF. Officers are currently supporting the DPCF to address these issues

- 2.3 In determining the organisation’s competence and capacity to undertake community management of Donegall Pass Community Centre, officers will also identify any support or capacity issues which will require the expertise of appropriate officers to facilitate a smooth and successful transition to community management.
- 2.4 On completion of the organisations information and support requirements being addressed, a further extension will be necessary to allow the DCPF time to consider fully all elements of this undertaking and to then provide a realistic, planned and robust approach to Council.

**3 Recommendation**

**The Committee is requested to authorise an extension which will allow DPCF to appraise its position and submit a proposal to Council. A report on the outcome will be presented to Committee in the autumn 2012.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Future Role of Members in Promoting Belfast in Europe**

The Committee agreed to defer, to its meeting 26th June, consideration of the above-mentioned report to enable further information to be provided.

Chairman