

# Development Committee

Tuesday, 11th September, 2012

## MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- Members present: Alderman Stalford (Chairman);  
Alderman Stoker; and  
Councillors Hussey, Keenan, Kelly, Kingston,  
Maskey, Ó Donnghaile, Ó Muilleoir,  
Spence and Webb.
- Also attended: The High Sheriff (Alderman M. Campbell).
- 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.

### Apologies

Apologies were reported from Aldermen Ekin and R. Newton and Councillors Hendron, Mac Giolla Mhín, McVeigh, A. Newton and Reynolds.

### Urban Regeneration and Community Development Framework - Consultation

The Committee considered the undernoted report, together with the Department for Social Development's consultation document on the above-mentioned matter, a copy of which was available on the Council's Modern.gov system:

#### **"1 Background Information**

- 1.1 The Department for Social Development (DSD) has launched a public consultation on the Government's proposals for an Urban Regeneration and Community Development policy framework for Northern Ireland. The consultation runs until 25th October.**
- 1.2 The DSD states that the new framework will:**
- **shape the strategic direction of urban regeneration and community development policy over the coming years, and**
  - **set out clear priorities for urban regeneration and community development programmes, both before and after the operational responsibility for these is transferred to councils under the reform of local government.**

- 1.3 Following the public consultation DSD say they will assess all existing Government policies and programmes to ensure compliance with the new Framework while all new policies and programmes will be developed within this context.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 In the introduction to its draft framework DSD note that it will shape the strategic direction of urban regeneration and community development policy over the coming years: *'It will set out for DSD and its partners, clear priorities for urban regeneration and community development programmes, both before and after the operational responsibility for these is transferred to councils under the reform of local government.'* As such, when adopted, the framework may have immediate policy implications for the role of Belfast City Council in urban regeneration and community development work in the city.

- 2.2 The consultation is structured around a number of questions that focus mainly on:

- Their stated objectives and enabling objectives
- The use of an outcomes model
- Their definitions of 'urban', 'regeneration' and 'community development'

- 2.3 The special meeting will be facilitated by CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies) – a Manchester-based charity and consultancy with a strong background in urban regeneration and community development. CLES have been asked to collate the responses from Members and officers and, incorporating good examples of practice and policy elsewhere, assist in preparing a draft Council response.

## 4 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Consider the content of the consultation document; and
2. As part of the facilitated meeting, identify any key issues which should inform the corporate response.

The Director outlined the principal aspects of the consultation document and reported that Mr. M. Jackson and Ms. S. Longlands, representing the Centre for Local Economic Strategies, were in attendance to make a presentation in respect of the consultation and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman (Alderman Stalford).

Mr. Jackson provided the Committee with an overview of the consultation and outlined its key aims, strengths and weaknesses. He indicated that four key policy objectives had been identified within the document, which were:

- to tackle area-based deprivation;
- to strengthen the competitiveness of towns and cities;
- to improve the linkages between areas of need and areas of opportunity; and
- to develop a more cohesive and engaged society.

Ms. Longlands pointed out that, within the context of the Review of Public Administration, the consultation was timely as it sought to reinforce the importance of urban regeneration and community development in delivering economic prosperity. However, she indicated that there remained issues which required further clarification, such as potential funding implications, the future role of the Council in urban regeneration and the extent of the involvement of local communities and cultural organisations in this regard. She indicated that the proposed establishment within the document of an 'outcomes-based' approach was to be welcomed in that any policies or programmes established as a result of the consultation would be achievement-based, measurable and would allow for objective scrutiny.

A Member made the point that it would be vital that any recommendations or policies arising from the consultation would provide tangible benefits to all communities within the City. He stated that the establishment of effective partnerships within the community, voluntary and private sectors would be fundamental to the future economic success of the City. A further Member emphasised the need for the consultation to recognise the importance of the City as an economic driver for the whole island of Ireland and to support the role played by cultural organisations within the various quarters of Belfast in being catalysts for economic prosperity.

After discussion, the Committee noted that a draft corporate response would be submitted for its consideration at its meeting on 16th October.

Chairman