

Development Committee

Tuesday, 6th November, 2012

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman C. Stalford (Chairman);
Aldermen Ekin and Stoker;
Councillors Keenan, Kelly, Kingston,
Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhín, Mallon,
Maskey, McKee, McVeigh, Ó Donnghaile,
Ó Muilleoir, Reynolds and Spence.

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

Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Austin, Hendron and Webb.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 2nd and 16th October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st November.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of item 5a, viz., 'Support Measures for Lagan Village Youth and Community Group', Councillor Kyle declared an interest in that he was a member of the group's steering committee.

Requests for Deputations

Gaeltacht Quarter Board

The Democratic Services Officer reported that correspondence had been received from Mr. J. MacSiacais on behalf of the Gaeltacht Quarter Board inviting the Committee to appoint a delegation to meet with the Board and to undertake a fact-finding tour of the area. He reminded Members that, as part of the Investment Programme, the Council had committed itself to develop a range of 'emerging partnerships' in the City, including the Gaeltacht Quarter, and to 'commit itself over the course of the Programme to work with communities and partners to define and refine project proposals, explore potential funding streams and help build capacity to support delivery'.

The Committee agreed to appoint a cross-party deputation to meet with the Board and to undertake a fact-finding tour of the area.

Belfast Folk Town Initiative

The Members were advised that a request to address the Committee had been received from Belfast Folk Town regarding its plans to regenerate the area of the City known historically as Folk Town. The area consisted of the following streets, viz., Castle Street, King Street, Berry Street, Marquis Street, Bank Street and Square and Chapel Lane. The Democratic Services Officer reported that the aim of the initiative would be to promote business opportunities and to attract shoppers and visitors to the area. This would be achieved through the hosting of high-quality cultural events, markets, festivals and guided tours to enhance the amenity of the area and to address issues such as anti-social behaviour.

The Committee agreed to receive a deputation from Belfast Folk Town at a future meeting.

Visit by Delegation from the State Department of the United States

With the permission of the Chairman, the Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development reported that a deputation representing the State Department of the United States would be visiting the City during November to undertake a fact-finding tour. As part of its itinerary for the visit, the deputation would be visiting the City Hall and, accordingly, given the valuable networking opportunity which would be presented by the visit, she sought the Committee's authority to host an event for the deputation including the provision of appropriate hospitality.

The Committee agreed to this course of action.

Women in Business Awards

The Committee noted the contents of a report which outlined the Council's involvement in the 2012 Women in Business Awards, specifically its sponsorship of the "Best Small Business Category" at the event on 22nd November.

After discussion, during which it was agreed that the Council's Women's Champion, Councillor Kelly, would present the award on the evening on behalf of the Council, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Global India - Update

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on the arrangements which had been put in place for the hosting by the City of the Global India Conference in April, 2013.

South by Southwest 2013

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 **Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has been playing a key role in supporting the development of the creative industries in Belfast, since 2004, with a key focus on the film, television, digital media, music and design sectors.**
- 1.2 **A key project within this support plan has been participation at the South by Southwest (SXSW) music and media conference in Austin, Texas. SXSW is the premier global event focusing on the creative side of the music and entertainment business which takes place in Austin, Texas each year. It involves a conference and exhibition as well as a series of pre-arranged meetings and music shows. The 2013 event will be held from 12 to 17 March.**
- 1.3 **Over the course of the last three years, we have helped local musicians and music businesses to secure new contracts to the value of more than \$500,000 with international labels and publishing companies.**

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 **The creative industries have been identified in a number of recent economic strategies and studies as being central to the future economic growth of Northern Ireland. The majority of creative businesses are based in Belfast and recent investments in the creative infrastructure – e.g. opening of two new studios at Titanic Quarter, redevelopment of Paint Hall studios – are central to capitalising on this potential growth.**
- 2.2 **Belfast City Council’s work in supporting creative businesses has focused on business development initiatives, capability development programmes and infrastructure investment. SXSW is a key business development initiative for companies in the priority sectors of Film, Television, Digital Media, Music and Design. We are currently looking at the potential of investing in the development of creative hub – as identified in the Investment Programme – and are carrying out a feasibility study to establish the demand and, if appropriate, identify the way forward, for this project.**

- 2.3 In recent years, Belfast City Council has been part of a collaborative attendance at SXSW by partners from Northern Ireland. Other organisations taking part include Invest NI and the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). This has proved to be a cost-effective method of engagement and has enhanced the profile of the individual companies and organisations taking part.
- 2.4 Discussions are currently under way with DCAL, Invest NI and Digital Derry – an umbrella organisation bringing together infrastructure and production companies working in the digital sector in the city of Derry – with a view to planning a potential collaborative presence at SXSW in 2013. This will build on a similar collaboration at last year’s event.
- 2.5 Members will recall that Council support for SXSW and other international initiatives for the sector was approved at the 21 August 2012 meeting of Development Committee. Council resources will be used to match the funding already in place from the other partners and will contribute towards costs for the hire of the exhibition stand, networking venue, PR, marketing and delegate passes.
- 2.6 In order to assess the impact of the Council’s contribution towards the event, a series of outcomes and targets will be established in advance of the visit and reviewed after the event. This information will be used to inform where and how the Council should prioritise its resources for the sector in future years and will inform a funding application to Invest NI for match-funding support for this and other creative industries activities.
- 2.7 In order to maximise the benefits from the event, it is proposed that the Chair and Deputy Chair of Committee (or nominees) along with two officers attend the SXSW event.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

Budget for SXSW engagement was approved at 21 August 2012 Development Committee. It is recommended that, as part of this budget, funding be set aside for participation by the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development Committee (or nominees) along with two officers.

4 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **Agree to partake in the collaborative trade mission to the SXSW event in Austin, Texas, in March 2013**
- **Approve attendance at the event by the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development Committee (or nominees) along with two officers.”**

After discussion, the Committee agreed that it be represented on the trade mission to Austin, Texas, in March, 2013 by the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, or their nominees, together with two Council officials and authorised also the associated travel, accommodation and subsistence costs.

It was noted also that a report would be submitted for the Committee's consideration which would outline the feasibility of the Council's delegation partaking in a further event in Silicon Valley, California, in conjunction with the Irish Technology Leadership Group, as part of the visit.

PEACE III Funding - Tender

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware that Council was awarded funding under Priority 1.1 of the EU Peace III programme to support programmes and projects which are working to create shared space and positive relations in Belfast.**
- 1.2 The Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit has secured funding of £600,000 under PEACE III Phase 2 to deliver two projects, City of Festivals II and Creative Legacies II. The projects are 100 per cent funded by Peace III. The Development Department has received a Service Level Agreement for each of the two projects**
- 1.3 Members are now being asked to approve the issue of a City of Festivals II tender process to allocate £50,000 of PIII funds to develop 5 small/medium festivals (target: 5 festivals) and to delegate award authority of same to the Director of Development.**

2 Key Issues

2.1 The two Peace III Phase 2 projects are:

2.2 City of Festivals II

This project incorporates four strands under a total budget of £300,000:

- Support for large festivals (8 contracts have been awarded to support the development of 15 2012-2013 festivals): £200,000.00. NOTE: 4 x £10k contracts to be issued in early 2013, target is 14 large festivals.**
- Management contract to support the development of small to medium community festivals: £50,000.**
- To fund half of a full time post of 37 hours per week over 18 months: £27,000.**
- Festivals Forum support for cross-border networking, evaluation, skills and audience development: £23,000.00.**

2.3 Creative Legacies II

- The programme incorporates six strands under a total budget of £300,000:**
- 15 x Development and Outreach Projects: £240,000.**
- To fund half of a full time post of 37 hours per week over 18 months: £27,000.**
- Creative Legacies Events (workshops, forums; exhibition, training): £18,000.**
- Creative Legacies Communications (advertising, marketing, photography, evaluation): £15,000.00**

2.4 The £50,000.00 development contract will be procured with assistance from the Procurement Unit and advertised in Your EU magazine, issued by the SEUPB.

Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that Members;

- 1. note the contents of this report;**
- 2 approve the issue of the tender process and**
- 3 provide the Director Of Development with delegated authority to award the contract to the successful bidder.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Lagan Village Youth and Community Group

(Councillor Kyle left the meeting whilst the item was under discussion.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Community Services have funded Bridge Community Association (BCA) for more than 15 years. In recent years this has included funding under our revenue, summer scheme, project and community chest grants streams.

1.2 Grants allocations in 2011/12 were:-

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Revenue Grant | £18,733.86 |
| Summer Scheme | £3,000.00 |
| CDP Grant | £500.00 |
| Total | £22,233.86 |

1.3 In May 2012, Belfast Regeneration Officer make raised concerns over the financial position of the organisation due to an over spend in one of the projects (Education by Choice) and that this over spend has a major impact upon the viability of the organisation. The group are currently working with DSD on a recovery plan. Council staff have been liaising with the group and and have formal correspondence confirming this position.

1.4 As a direct result, BCC revenue grant funding for 2012/13 was put on hold pending completion of our annual monitoring return for the previous year and confirmation of the group’s current financial position. On the 7th August the Bridge Community Association confirmed that the organisation would close on the 30th September with the Community Centre in Balaret Street reverting to DSD.

1.5 BCA confirm the over spend relates to the Education by Choice project and that the youth and community activities had not been a contributing factor. It is apparent that the EBC project had anticipated an income stream which did not actualise. BELB reduced the guaranteed income to this project when they cut the number of pupil places they would fund on this alternative programme. However an internal investigation concluded that the project was not downgraded to reflect this reduction in finance rather increasingly the expenditure was covered via the BCA bank overdraft facility

- 1.6 DSD have confirmed they have no issue in regards to any financial irregularities and they have concluded that all the grant monies provided by them was spent appropriately.
- 1.7 As noted above the BCC annual revenue grant award to BCA of £19,000 was withheld because BCA did not pass the monitoring exercise. BCA have listed BCC as creditors to the amount of £7,000, however, this wholly relates to withheld grant and BCC is not therefore liable.
- 1.8 BCC do not fund the Education by Choice project which concluded in June 2012, in line with the academic year. Also, there were no elected members on the BCA Committee so there is no related liability risk.
- 1.9 BCA suggest any further investigation will now be carried out by the insolvency practitioners.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 BRO and BCC were approached to see if they would allow the centre to operate under the management of a newly constituted group, Lagan Village Youth and Community Group (LVYCG). This group has been formed from representatives from the existing user groups and from local people. It can be noted that in their private capacity, two local councillors and a MLA also sit on the committee. There is no involvement from previous committee members of the Bridge C.A. This new group is seeking to ensure that the local community continue to have access to the centre and to the services that can take place within it.
- 2.2 DSD have initially granted a 4 week lease of the centre. This short lease was put in place to allow the group to officially take control of the centre and to start operating while allowing officials to finalise proposals to the Minister to consider authorisation of the lease renewal on a rolling 3 month basis.
- 2.3 BRO are continuing to fund the 2 Youth and Community salaries through the East Belfast Community Development Agency (EBCDA).
- 2.4 In order to support the ongoing provision of local service, and in line with DSD and BRO actions, officers recommend that committee consider the following measures:

- The re-allocation of community services grant support contracts from the Bridge Community Association to the newly formed Lagan Village Youth and Community Group from 1st October 2012.
- All grant to be subject to our agreed monitoring requirements, however, to support compliance we suggest grant should be released on a quarterly basis while the group continue to demonstrate compliance.
- Work with EBCDA to agree and deliver a management training programme for LVYCG similar to that offered to Ballymacarrett /Connswater Community & Leisure Services Ltd. This programme will assess and then provide training and support to ensure the new group have adequate management skills and operational capacity.
- Allocate related officer time to both support and monitor LVYCG
- Continue to allocate BCC play staff to deliver services in the centre
- Implement a programme of Community Development Outreach support to identify local need and seek increased local involvement. This will include seeking ways to work in a more coordinated way with neighbouring community groups, for example, Willowfield Parish Community Association, Oasis Caring in Action, Short Strand Community Association, Lower Castlereagh Community Group etc.
- Ongoing BCC officer and grant support will be reviewed to take account of the outcome of the current audit investigation.

2.5 If agreeable, these measures could be put in place for a period of 18 months up to 31st March 2014 to allow the group to become established and to apply for grant support in their own right.

2.6 This time-frame is in line with the committee approved extension of grant contracts to support the development of the new Belfast Community Investment Programme.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 If agreed, the related grant commitment can be met from within the agreed 2012/13 Community Services Grant Aid programme budget and our revenue estimates for 2013/14.

3.2 The 2012/13 grant package would be allocated to LVYCG on a pro rata basis.

- 3.3 The 2013/14 Revenue grant to LVYCG would be approved as part of the committee agreed extension to all current revenue grant contracts in order to support the design of BCIP.
- 3.4 LVYCG would be eligible to apply for 2013/14 community services small grant funding including Summer Scheme and Project Grants.
- 3.5 Proposed officer support within current staffing arrangements.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are asked that, subject to continued support from BRO, they consider and agree the following:
- i. the package of officer and support measures as outlined
 - ii. the pro-rata transfer of current grant commitments from Bridge Community Association to the newly formed Lagan Village Youth and Community Group for the period to 31st March 2014
 - iii. All support would be subject to LVYCG fully engaging in the BCC officer support programme and their meeting all monitoring and related compliance requirements on a quarterly basis.
 - iv. Support arrangements to be informed by and reviewed in light of audit recommendations.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Urban Regeneration and Community Development Policy Framework - Consultation Response

The Committee noted the contents of a Council response to the Department for Social Development's consultation on the above-mentioned matter. It was noted further that the response had been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 19th October and endorsed by the Council on 1st November.

RISE Public Artwork

The Deputy Chairman advised the Committee that the Council-supported artwork 'RISE', which was located at the Broadway Roundabout, had been successful in the 'Small Projects' category at the annual Institution of Structural Engineers' Structural Awards.

The Committee agreed that a letter of congratulations be forwarded on its behalf to the sculptor of the artwork, Mr. Wolfgang Buttress.

All-Island Pride of Place Awards

The Community Services Manager reported that the Council had been awarded Best Local Authority in the All-Island Pride of Place Awards, which had taken place in Limerick city on 3rd November. She reported that, in the Cities' Competition, Upper Andersonstown had been successful in the housing estates category, whilst Willowfield Parish had been awarded second place in the community areas with populations greater than 2,000 category. In addition, she reported that Lower Ormeau had received third place in the category for previous winners in the Cities' Competition.

The Committee agreed that letters of congratulations be forwarded on its behalf to each of the successful groups.

Chairman