

# Development Committee

Tuesday, 19th March, 2013

## MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman C. Stalford (Chairman);  
The High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston);  
Aldermen Ekin and Stoker; Councillors Austin,  
Hussey, Keenan, Kelly, Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhin,  
Mallon, Maskey, McKee, McVeigh, Ó Donnghaile,  
Ó Muilleoir, Reynolds, Spence and Webb.

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

### Apology

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Hendron.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

### Council Representation on the West Belfast Partnership Board

The Democratic Services Officer reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 15th June, 2011, it had agreed to appoint eight Members to represent the Council on the West Belfast Partnership Board, viz., six from Sinn Fein and two from the Social Democratic and Labour Party. Those appointments had reflected the proportional strengths of the parties in the Upper and Lower Falls District Electoral Areas at the Local Government Elections in May, 2011.

It was reported that correspondence had since been received from the Chief Executive of the West Belfast Partnership Board indicating that it had undertaken a review of its governance arrangements. The letter pointed out that the representation on the Board from the Council should have been made up of six Council Members, rather than eight. The Board had therefore requested that the Council amend its representation accordingly.

The Committee agreed to reduce the Council's representation on the Board from eight to six and, in accordance with the proportional strengths of the parties in the Upper and Lower Falls areas following the Local Government Elections in 2011, agreed that it would be represented by five Members from Sinn Fein and one from the Social Democratic and Labour Party.

**Notice of Motion – City Centre Planning Policy**

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting on 4th March, the undernoted notice of motion, which had been moved by Councillor McCarthy and seconded by Councillor Mallon, had been referred to the Committee for consideration:

**“This Council notes with interest the Department for Social Development’s publication of the ‘High Street Taskforce Report’ which highlights the adverse impact on city and town centres by what is perceived as an ‘imbalanced spatial planning policy’ which high street retailers have stated entices shoppers away from the city and town centres to out-of-centre shopping centres;**

**It recognises that the Regional Development Strategy (2035), adopted by the NI Executive in 2012, states under SFG3 that Belfast City Centre should be enhanced and that the role of Belfast City Centre as the primary retail location in Northern Ireland should be supported and strengthened;**

**It notes the advice of the DoE Minister to the planned Public Inquiry into the planning application for a department store, nineteen other retail units and a number of restaurants at Sprucefield outside Lisburn, which would restrict future retail developments there to outlets selling only bulky goods; and endorses the integrated policy approach from DoE, DSD and DRD which will strengthen and protect the position of Belfast City Centre and town centres across the North.”**

In the absence of Councillor McCarthy, Councillor Keenan provided an overview of the aims and objectives of the notice of motion. He emphasised the relevance of the motion in light of the Review of Public Administration and the prime opportunity it would present to enhance Belfast’s position as the economic driver for the region.

After discussion, the Committee endorsed the notice of motion as set out.

**Outstanding Accounts**

In accordance with the Council’s Financial Regulations, the Director sought the Committee’s authority to have a number of outstanding accounts amounting to £5,761.14 written-off, a schedule of which had been submitted for the Committee’s information. He pointed out that all reasonable measures had been undertaken to recover the debts.

The Committee granted the authority sought.

### **Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

1.1 The Council secured £698,700 funding in August 2011, towards the provision of a Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme as part of the Department for Regional Development (DRD) Active Travel Demonstration Projects fund. The development of a Public Bike Hire scheme is identified as a partnership project in Belfast City Council’s Investment Programme 2012-2015. The Council proposes to work in partnership to develop a public bike hire scheme that encourages increased use and facilitates active travel in Belfast.

1.2 An Outline Business Case (OBC) for a Belfast Public Bike Hire scheme was commissioned by the Strategic Investment Board in conjunction with the Department for Regional Development and Belfast City Council and completed in July 2011. The OBC suggests that a public bike hire scheme would be viable for Belfast based on experiences and evidence from other cities. The Outline Business Case estimated the funding will cover the costs of the physical infrastructure for a mid-sized scheme providing up to 300 bikes and up to 30 docking stations in city centre locations.

1.3 The Council aims to develop a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation public bike hire scheme characterised by:

- public access bikes situated on public spaces with a standard robust design;
- a network of docking stations and bikes throughout city centre locations;
- a self service model;
- flexible rental periods with tariffs to encourage short term rentals; and
- a scheme with the potential to expand to other parts of the city.

#### **2 Key Issues**

##### **2.1 Geographical coverage of the Public Bike Hire Scheme**

Based on the approved funding bid, the first phase of the Belfast Public bike hire scheme will give priority to the core city centre area as designated in the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan. Based on experience elsewhere docking stations should be located no more than 300-500 metres apart at key strategic locations. Belfast City Centre boundary covers 3.611 km<sup>2</sup> and

one docking station should cover a buffer area just over 0.1 km<sup>2</sup>. It is recommended that consideration is given to extending the coverage to include parts of Titanic Quarter and up to the Queens Quarter area if it can be accommodated within the current funding arrangement. The Council wish to develop a scheme which has the potential to expand to other parts of the city and to cater for city events.

## **2.2 Siting of Docking stations**

**Bike Hire Docking Stations need to be located at frequent intervals and placed at strategic locations. It is essential the docking stations are visible, easy to find and should not impede pedestrian or vehicular movements.**

**2.3 The process to identify suitable sites in Belfast City Centre for the bike hire docking stations is currently underway. A number of criteria have been identified in order to select the most appropriate sites considering the following elements:**

- Employment clusters / high footfall areas**
- Cultural / tourism destinations**
- Educational destinations**
- Inner city residential areas**
- Public transport nodes / existing cycle infrastructure**
- Available space and ability to meet infrastructure requirements**
- Visibility and accessibility**
- Compliance with disability legislation requirements**
- Aesthetics – ability to fit into the built heritage and public realm.**

**2.4 The Council will work with the statutory bodies and other land owners to obtain public and private commitment and secure agreements and statutory approvals for use of the land for docking stations and other service requirements. A site locations workshop was held on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2013 with government departments who own land in the city centre such as DRD Roads Service, DSD, NIHE and also involved Planning Service and the universities.**

## **2.5 Consultation**

A stakeholder forum will be set up for the duration of the project and community consultation is also planned. The Council aims to meet the needs of the local communities when delivering the public bike hire scheme in Belfast. The Council will promote opportunities such as training schemes and city events to encourage use of the scheme by local communities particularly in disadvantaged areas or with disadvantaged groups.

## **2.6 Procurement**

The OBC recommends an integrated Design, Build, Operate and Maintain (DBOM) contracting approach as the preferred form of delivery for bike hire schemes and is likely to deliver the greatest level of risk transfer; generate the greatest level of interest across experienced scheme operators and deliver greatest value for money. Expressions of Interest are currently being drafted to scope the level of interest for the Design, Build, Operate and Maintain element of the scheme. A further Expression of Interest will be issued to seek the level of interest of companies seeking sponsorship/branding associated with the scheme. In line with Council attributes certain products/services will be excluded such as alcohol and tobacco branding. The income generated from sponsorship will contribute to the annual running cost of the scheme.

## **2.7 Delegated Authority**

It is recommended that the Planning and Transport Unit work in liaison with the Project Management Unit of the Property and Project Department who will manage the procurement of design, build, operate and maintain services required to implement the public bike hire scheme and the procurement of potential sponsorship/branding associated with the scheme and the subsequent administration of the contracts..

- 2.8 The award of funding for the physical infrastructure of the project is time bound and must be drawn down before March 2015. The Council should proceed with the procurement process and appoint the most appropriate operator in Autumn 2013. The Council would envisage that the construction process should proceed in 2014 in order for the scheme to go live by March 2015.
- 2.9 Committee is therefore requested to approve, from a service perspective, the invitation of tenders, the award of contracts and the implementation of the Belfast Public Bike Scheme.

**2.10 As this project is included in the capital programme and the Investment Programme the decision of the Development Committee will be commended to the SP&R Committee for their consideration and decision from a corporate financial perspective.**

### **3 Resource Implications**

**3.1 There are resource implications in relation to the future operation and maintenance of the implemented Bike Hire scheme.**

### **4 Recommendations**

**4.1 It is recommended that Members:**

- note the update of progress for the Belfast Public Bike Hire Scheme and the proposed coverage of Phase 1; and**
- approve the advancement of the project to tender, award of contracts and implementation and to commend this decision to the SP&R Committee for their consideration and decision from a corporate financial perspective.”**

A prolonged discussion ensued in respect of the report. In response to a Member's question, the Director indicated that the revenue costs associated with the project had, as yet, to be determined. He indicated that a report in this regard would be submitted for consideration in due course once a business model for the had been agreed.

A further Member expressed concern that Phase I of the Scheme had indicated that, in addition to the City Centre, the Queen's and Titanic Quarters would be incorporated within the initial operating model. He pointed out that such a proposal would be to the detriment of other Quarters of the City, especially those within areas of disadvantage and social need, such as the Gaeltacht Quarter and the North Belfast Cultural Corridor. He suggested that the proposals should have been considered within context of creating connectivity across the City. He added that areas of major employment, such as the Royal Group of Hospitals and the Mater Hospital, should have been incorporated within any plan to extend the Scheme beyond the City Centre.

The Director pointed out that there were limited resources available to oversee the implementation of Phase I of the Scheme and that any proposals to extend its scope beyond what had been suggested would need to be considered as part of the Council's future Capital Programme. He indicated that the recommendation to extend the Scheme to the Queen's and Titanic Quarters had been based on an appraisal of the viability of incorporating those two areas and added that this assessment had indicated that there would be sufficient demand to sustain the project. He emphasised that, given that there existed an urgency to utilise the funding allocated to establish the Scheme, it would be prudent for the Committee to endorse the proposals, as submitted, and that the matter of extending the Scheme to other areas of the City could be addressed in due course.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Ekin,  
Seconded by Councillor Webb and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendation and agrees that a further report be submitted to the Committee's meeting on 9th April which would outline the potential capital costs associated in extending the scope of the Scheme to include the Gaeltacht Quarter, the North Belfast Cultural Quarter and the Lower Newtownards Roads.

On a vote by show of hands, twelve Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared carried.

### **Transport Issues – Update**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the proposed road works at the Dee Street Bridge, the Boyne Bridge and further works as part of 'Belfast on the Move' project. In addition, the report outlined a range of changes which had been proposed in respect of urban clearway restrictions on the Lisburn, Stranmillis and Malone Roads.

The Committee noted the information provided and agreed that a letter be forwarded to the Department of the Environment's Road's Service indicating that, in order to assist in the promotion of the retail sector, it was of the Committee view that urban clearway restrictions should be eased specifically on the Lisburn Road.

### **Use of Bus Lanes by Taxis**

The Committee was advised that the Department for Regional Development had carried out a consultation in 2012 which had explored the viability of all public and private hire taxis being permitted to use designated bus lanes. It was reported that, arising from the exercise, the Department was proposing that all public and private hire taxis would be permitted to utilise bus lanes and that this amendment would be implemented in due course.

The Committee noted the information provided.

### **Festivals Forum Action Plan**

The Committee considered the contents of a Festivals Forum Action Plan and was advised that the aim of the Action Plan would be to influence and increase the awareness of the contribution which festivals could make to the City.

The Committee endorsed the Action Plan, a copy of which was available on the Council's Modern.gov website.

### **European Social Fund - Match Funding Requests**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 Members may be aware that European Social Fund (ESF) Priority One provides financial support to promote training and other activities to assist long term unemployed people obtain sustainable employment. Funding is awarded through an open call for projects. Successful applicants are allocated funding on condition that they can provide 35% match funding from another public sector source.**

**1.2 At the February 2012 meeting of the Development Committee, Members agreed to provide match funding for four European Social Fund projects. Three projects were managed by community-based training providers, namely Stepping Stones; Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT) and Time Associates while the fourth project was led by Belfast City Council, with Lisburn City Council as a project partner.**

**1.3 The ESF projects are funded through Department of Employment and Learning (DEL). Match funding must be secured on an annual basis. Requests for match funding for these projects in the financial year 2013-2014 have now been received by Belfast City Council.**

**1.4 Although the original letters of offer from DEL were issued on the basis of a three year programme, DEL have now written to all project promoters to confirm that they can offer funding to the approved projects for an additional year (2014-2015) should the project promoters wish to take this offer up. Equally, they have confirmed that they are in a position to offer an uplift of 25% in the funding available to interested projects. In both instances, these offers are based on the project being able to draw in the appropriate levels of match funding.**



## **2 Key Issues**

### **2.1 HARTE**

To date, 88 participants have completed the programme gaining a total of 625 Level 2 qualifications in industry recognised fields such as customer care, health and safety, food hygiene, World Host and team leadership. This equates to more than 7 vocational qualifications per participant. In addition, some participants have gone on to 'next steps' training on topics such as 'service of food at a table' and 'preparing and serving wines'. These participants have gained a total of 273 additional qualifications in these areas.

**2.2 34 participants have obtained employment and 12 are awaiting further interviews or are going through selection process.**

**2.3 In the coming year, it is planned that there will be 4 HARTE programmes, involving 60 long term unemployed people. Participants will be provided with accredited training and will be given dedicated pre-employment support and mentoring to help them find a job within the relevant field. The project has a target of 24 people into employment in the 2013-2014 financial year.**

**2.4 In the application made to DEL the estimated total project expenditure for the coming year will be £142,000. European Social Fund (ESF) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) will provide £92,000 of the costs and Lisburn City Council will contribute £15,000. To continue the HARTE programme it is therefore anticipated that a match funding contribution of £25,000 will be required from Belfast City Council. This represents a cost per job to Council of around £1000 per person. In addition, 90% of participants in the programme will acquire a range of transferable skills as a result of their engagement. Given the target group (long-term unemployed, voluntary referrals) this achievement cannot be under-estimated, given that over 60% of participants on current programmes have low or no skills.**

### **2.5 Jobs on the Move**

The progress report received from USDT indicates that the project is on course to achieve its targets in terms of engaging with individuals and placing them into employment. 245 individuals engaged with the project to date this year with 23 obtaining employment against targets of 300 individuals engaged with the project and 30 to gain employment.

- 2.6 In the coming year, it is planned that the project will work with 300 participants, helping 10% of those find employment. Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT) also manages the LEMIS contract for west Belfast and an additional 34 clients will be helped into employment through that programme. USDT are also coordinating the work on behalf of the LEMIS providers across the city to place long-term unemployed in vacancies created by Belfast City Council. At present, a number of participants are undertaking work placement and training with the Council as part of a pre-employment programme and five posts have been ring-fenced for individuals from that group (to be recruited following a competitive interview process).
- 2.7 Other training being undertaken by USDT clients includes SIA training (for security/door staff) as well as tour guiding and forklift licence.
- 2.8 In addition to provision on-site, USDT also engage in a wide range of outreach activities with hard-to-reach groups. This coming year, they plan to operate outreach clinics in locations such as Upper Andersonstown Community Forum; Glen Community Centre; Conway Education Centre; Suffolk Library and Cloverhill Hostel.
- 2.9 The total project costs for the USDT programme are £264,170 for the coming year. The organisation is requesting match-funding support of £30,000 from Belfast City Council. The other funding sources are DEL/ESF (£171,704); other DEL match (£17,000) and Job Assist Centre (£45,456).

2.10 East Belfast Mission (EBM) - Jobs4u Project

The progress report received from EBM shows that the project engaged with 152 out of an annual target of 170 (to end January 2013) and the Mission has confirmed that they are likely to reach their target within the current year. The employment outcomes for the year were very positive – 78 full and part-time jobs were supported against a target of 40. Some of this can be attributed to East Belfast Mission's targeted programmes around the opening of the Skainos Centre and a number of programme participants were able to find employment opportunities within the new development. 25 of the participants gained a total of 62 qualifications from the programme.

- 2.11 In the coming year, the Jobs4u project will increase its activity levels, with a target of 212 participants registering for support and at least 53 finding employment.

2.12 The total project costs for the Jobs4u programme are £190,253 for the coming year. The organisation is requesting match-funding support of £12,485 from Belfast City Council. The other funding sources are DEL/ESF (£123,665); other DEL match (£15,312) and East Belfast Mission (£38,791).

2.13 Time Associates/Belfast Metropolitan College – Learn to Earn

The progress report received from the Learn to Earn project shows that the project engaged with 26 participants (annual target 24). Of these, 8 found employment or went into self-employment and the participants amassed a total of 96 qualifications as part of their engagement in the programme. These include exploring enterprise; ILM management and food hygiene certification.

2.14 In the coming year, the project has a target of recruiting 32 participants, 14 of whom will progress into employment or self employment. It is also anticipated that participants will gain a total of 150 additional qualifications as part of the programme.

2.15 The total project costs for the Learn to Earn programme are £85,518 for the coming year. The organisation is requesting match-funding support of £6,000 from Belfast City Council. The other funding sources are DEL/ESF (£55,587); Time Associates (£11,966) and Belfast Metropolitan College (11,966).

2.16 Members will recall that, at the 29 January meeting of Development Committee, the need for strategic-level engagement of statutory partners to gain consensus on the key employability challenges for the city was recognised in order to prioritise and develop activity which will support the city's economic growth and target those furthest from the labour market. They also acknowledged that one of the most significant challenges was the range of employability-related activity that was under way in the city but that was not necessarily aligned to the key challenges of the current labour market.

2.17 It is anticipated that, as a result of the city-wide engagement, we will work to encourage DEL to take a more targeted approach to the new ESF programmes (from 2014). However, in the interim, it is not possible to move away from their letters of offer with existing projects and therefore the challenge is to avoid duplication where possible and to encourage projects to align to agreed targets.

2.18 For each of the ESF projects listed above, we are working with partners to ensure that delivery is focusing on the areas of need as identified in our research and to encourage collaboration where possible in order to maximise the impact of the intervention.

2.19 Although DEL has encouraged the projects to seek funding for a further year's extension (i.e. 2014-2015), we have advised projects that we would not be able to make any commitments for that timeframe, given our annual budgeting cycle. Therefore the existing requests are for financial year 2013/14 only.

### 3 Resource Implications

3.1 The total match funding requirements for the four projects in the coming financial year are £73,485.

### 4 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to consider the match-funding as set out:

**HARTE: £25,000**  
**Jobs on the move: £30,000**  
**Jobs4u: £12,485**  
**Learn2earn: £6,000."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### Eurocities Social Affairs Forum

The Director informed the Committee that the annual Eurocities Social Affairs Forum would take place in Katowice, Poland, on a date to be confirmed in April, 2013. He explained that the theme for the event would be 'Neighbourhood Approaches to Promoting Social Inclusion, Local Activation and Local Initiatives.' He provided an overview of the keynote speakers, together with the range of topics which would be explored at the various sessions and workshops. He indicated that the conference would provide valuable opportunities for the Council's representatives to discuss key issues relating to social affairs and emerging European Union funding opportunities.

The Committee agreed, given the content of the forum, that a representative of the Council's European Working Group (or their nominee) be authorised to attend the event.

Chairman