

Development Committee

Tuesday, 19th November, 2013

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Stalford);
the High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston);
Aldermen Ekin and Stoker;
Councillors Austin, Beattie, Convery,
Garrett, Hussey, Keenan, Kelly, Kyle,
Magee, Mac Giolla Mhín, Reynolds,
Spence, Verner 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.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd 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 4th November.

Apology

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Ó Donnghaile.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Presentations at Future Meetings

The Committee agreed to receive presentations from representatives of Belfast City Centre Management and Visit Belfast on dates to be agreed in conjunction with the Chairman.

Olympia Community Centre Support Group

Pursuant to the Committee's decision of 22nd October, the Chairman welcomed Mr. W. Dickson, Ms. J. Andrews, Ms. M. Swift and Ms. A. Dickson, who were in attendance to make representations to the Committee in respect of future community service provision within the Greater Village area.

Ms. Andrews and Mr. Dickson outlined the concerns of the support group and stated that they would be opposed to any plans to establish a community centre outside of the Olympia and Tate's Avenue areas. Ms. Andrews indicated that the residents of the

aforementioned areas were of the view that any community centre, which the Council would provide as part of the overall redevelopment of the Windsor Park and Olympia site, should be located close to the communities which utilised such a facility. She pointed out that a community centre located within the envisaged sports village would provide direct benefit to local residents and would enhance greatly the quality of life within the area. The deputation thanked the Committee for receiving them and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Stoker,
Seconded by Councillor Reynolds and

Resolved – That the Committee supports in principle the development of the proposed new leisure facility at the Windsor Park/Olympia site. The Committee would request, however, that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee ensures that the proposed community space within the centre would be used for programmes and associated activities to meet the needs of the local community. The Committee requests further that it has an input into the programming of the community facilities within the new building.

Inward Trade Missions

America Ireland Fund - Business Mission to Belfast

The Committee was advised that the Lord Mayor had undertaken recently a trade mission on behalf of the Council to the United States and Canada to promote the City as a business and tourist destination. The Director outlined the range of strategic meetings which the Lord Mayor had attended, which had involved representatives of the New York Stock Exchange and the Deputy Heads of both the British Council and Irish Consulate.

The Director reported that, arising from the visit, the American Ireland Fund had confirmed that it would be undertaking a trade mission to Belfast in 2014. He reported that the visit would take place in late-February and it was anticipated that upwards of 20 American-based companies would be visiting the City. The Director outlined a draft programme for the mission and he indicated that, amongst other things, the Lord Mayor would host a civic reception for the deputation, together with a number of key networking events, the cost of which would be approximately £10,000.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that a sum of £10,000 be allocated for the purposes of hosting the American Ireland Fund trade mission.

Mayor of New Brunswick - Inward Investment Visit

The Director indicated that the Lord Mayor had met also with the Mayor of New Brunswick, Mr. James Cahill, during his recent visit to the United States and reported that exploratory discussions had been undertaken in respect of promoting economic, tourism and cultural links between Belfast and New Brunswick. He stated that the Mayor of New

Brunswick had expressed an interest in visiting Belfast to explore further the issues which had been raised and it was anticipated that that visit would take place during January, 2014, and that 10 American companies would be in attendance with the Mayor.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed the sum of £5,000 be allocated for the purposes of hosting the Inward Investment Visit.

Gaelic Sports Festival - Funding Request

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1. Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 In July 2013 Officers received initial details in regard to the above project. In order to progress the item to a level for presentation to Committee additional information was requested. This has now been received and the following report is designed to allow Members to assess whether it should be financially supported by Council to the sum of £10,000.
- 1.2 The GAA Clubs at Queen’s University have secured the right to host all of the third level education men’s and women’s Gaelic sports finals in 2014. This comprises of: Sigerson Cup (Mens Gaelic Football); Fitzgibbon Cup (Mens Hurling); O’Connor Cup (Ladies’ Football) and Ashbourne Cup (Camogie). The tournaments would be spaced over a number of weekends in February and March 2014.
- 1.3 Queen’s University see this as an ambitious and unique initiative as no third level education establishment has ever hosted the four major tournaments in the same academic year. They also see this as an opportunity to develop Gaelic sports Belfast, while creating additional economic activity for the city as all games would be hosted at Queen’s Sports facilities at Upper Malone.
- 1.4 Members are asked to note that one element of the project, the Fitzgibbon Cup, has been offered, £5,472 via the Council’s Support for Sport scheme. Thus the £10,000 would be in addition to this (total £15,472).
- 1.5 In addition Members are reminded that the outline City Events Unit budget for the period, nor the specified reserve for special events, has any finance earmarked for such a project.

2. **Key Issues**

- 2.1 The proposed tournaments would take place over four consecutive weekends with all competitions happening at Queen's facilities at the Dub on Upper Malone:

Weekend starting Friday 14th February – Ashbourne Cup

Three tiers of competition, including twelve teams from Ireland and the UK.

Weekend starting Friday 21st February – Sigerson Cup

Three tiers of competition, including twelve teams from Ireland and the UK.

Weekend starting Friday 28th February – Fitzgibbon Cup

Three tiers of competition, including twelve teams from Ireland and the UK.

Weekend starting Friday 7th March – O'Connor Cup

Three tiers of competition, including twelve teams from Ireland and the UK.

- 2.2 In addition to the competitions, it is proposed that the festival would also include a program of events across all four weekends. The purpose of these would be to celebrate university sport, student achievement and Gaelic games.
- 2.3 The organisers estimate the number of participants, over the four weekends, to be 2,200. They have stipulated that this assessment is based on previous participant numbers. They also state that participants and support teams would stay two to three nights, which would generate up to £300,000 for the city's hotel sector. Queen's also estimate that up 10,000 spectators would attend over the four week period.

3. **Resource Implications**

3.1 **Financial**

The total cost of the event is £130,000. The majority of funding will be generated from the governing body, industry partnership, sales and merchandising and fundraising among Queen's GAA alumni. However, the tournament organisers are seeking a level of support from the Council (£10,000), Sport NI and DCAL.

- 3.2 Given that £5,472 has already been allocated from the Support for Sport fund for the Fitzgibbon Cup, if Members approve the funding request for £10,000 it would bring the Council's total contribution for the event to £15,472.

3.3 Whilst there is no budget available within neither the City Events budget nor the specified reserve for special events, the Quarter 2 Finance Report (reported earlier in the meeting) details a forecast under spend of £28,000 at year end. If Members are minded to support this request it could be recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 22 November 2013 that the funding request be supported and resourced through the Development Department forecast under spend.

3.4 Members are reminded that, neither, the outline City Events Unit budget for the period, nor the specified reserve for special events, has any finance earmarked for such an event.

4. **Recommendations**

4.1 If Members decide to support the funding request then a recommendation to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee should be agreed which would request that SP&R approve the funding through the Development Department forecast under spend as part of the review of the corporate quarter 2 forecast.

5. **Decision Tracking**

If the above recommendation is agreed then the Director of Finance and Resources will include the recommendation as part of the Quarter 2 forecast which will be presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 22nd November 2013.

If funding was approved, Officers will provide updates on progress of the project and provide post-project details as part of the Development Department's annual review. These outcomes will be presented to Members as part of the City Events Unit key performance indicators."

The Committee agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to authorise the expenditure as outlined.

Women in Business - International Business
Women's Conference 2014

The Committee was advised that Women in Business Northern Ireland would be hosting an International Business Women's Conference between 12th and 15th May, 2014, at a range of venues across the City. The Director indicated that an opportunity existed for the Council to provide corporate sponsorship, at a cost of £15,000, for the event. He pointed out that other key funders would include the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister, Invest NI and Visit Belfast. He outlined the benefits which the Council would accrue should it agree to sponsor the event, which included significant

publicity, and he added that the sponsorship package would entitle the Council to avail also of a number of free places at the event, partake in panel discussions and network with key executives from within the wider business community.

The Committee agreed that the Council provide sponsorship for the event at a cost of £15,000.

External Market Applications

At the request of the Director, the Committee agreed to defer, to its meeting in December, a report in respect of the above-mentioned matter.

International Framework - China Action Plan

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Background Information

1.1 Members will recall that in August this year a paper was received on International Relations recommending a number of actions to strengthen and support our work in China for the benefit of our city. Actions proposed were agreed by Committee and this paper provides an update on two of those actions which relate to our Sister City Relationship with Hefei and proposal to strengthen our links with the city of Shenyang.

2.1 Hefei

Members will be aware that Belfast signed a Sister City agreement with Hefei in 2005 but that our relationship with Hefei has not yielded anticipated results. It was agreed the relationship should be reviewed and that Belfast City Council representatives should attend the Sister City Conference in Hefei from October 27th to November 2nd.

Cllr Mac Giolla Mhin attended the conference with Deirdre Ferguson from the European Unit. The visit was very successful in terms of promoting our city, cementing the Sister City relationship and identifying areas of mutual interest for our cities.

In preparation for the visit to Hefei our Belfast China Stakeholder members were asked to give consideration to opportunities for collaboration with the city. A range of organisations including our two universities, Confucius Institute and hub schools, the British Council and PSNI responded. Their suggestions were presented during our meetings in Hefei and opportunities highlighted included collaboration in relation to:

EU funded projects which China is eligible to participate in

- Renewables
- Creative industry
- Tourism
- Connected Health
- Art and cultural exchanges
- Exchange of people with a focus on home stays
- Visits from high rank officials
- School/teacher exchanges

These were welcomed by Hefei officials and direct contact will be made by the Chief of the Foreign Affairs division with our local organisations to follow up on potential opportunities.

In the August Committee report members were also notified of the proposed art exhibition to take place in Hefei 2014. This work is led by an organisation called Irish Wave and a further report was received by Committee in October to support an inward visit from Hefei to work with artists to plan this exhibition which will now take place in Hefei, Belfast, Dublin and Cork next year.

Following our recent visit to Hefei, officials welcome the opportunity to expand the focus of their inward visit to include meetings with stakeholders to discuss wider areas of collaboration as highlighted above. We are now making preparations with the city of Hefei for an inward visit to Belfast in December 2013 or January 2014.

Shenyang

Members will also be aware that in the August Committee report the city of Shenyang was identified as a Chinese city that Belfast should seek to strengthen and formalise its relationship with. The rationale behind this recommendation was based on the fact that key city stakeholder organisations, Queens University, University of Ulster, Bombardier and the Confucius Institute have well established relationships with this city within the educational and business spheres and also at senior political levels. All stakeholder organisations welcome the opportunity to strengthen links and to build on these to open doors and facilitate future benefits in the areas highlighted in our International Relations Framework.

The initial proposal of strengthening or having a close relationship between Belfast and Shenyang was raised when the Deputy Mayor of Shenyang visited Belfast in May 2012 with Shenyang Aircraft executives. That visit included a meeting with the First Minister at Stormont. Then in

November 2012 Minister Foster visited Shenyang together with Michael Ryan and others as part of a wider NI Trade Mission to China led by the First and Deputy First Ministers.

Further encouragement to make an approach to Shenyang came from a meeting with the China Britain Business Council (CBBC) when it became known that Shenyang had issued a call to develop 'friendly cooperative relationships' with other cities. We responded to the call and CBBC arranged a meeting for Cllr Reynolds (with Committee agreement) to meet with the Foreign Affairs office when he was in Shenyang during the summer. At that meeting Cllr Reynolds reiterated our desire to formalise our relationship with the city and we followed up with written communications reaffirming our interest.

A response has now been received from the Shenyang Aircraft Company, (Bombardier's partner in Shenyang) which has been the conduit for correspondence from the Shenyang Mayor's office. Chen Haibo, the Mayor of Shenyang has confirmed he would like to meet with our Lord Mayor on the afternoon of November 22nd and welcomes the potential opportunity to discuss a more formal arrangement between our cities.

Bombardier are co-ordinating the visit of Mayor Chen Haibo who will be accompanied by 21 delegates and 4 Shenyang Aircraft staff. The Lord Mayor has been invited to take part in proceedings which include a roundtable meeting with discussion on cooperation, a tour of the Wing facility, a potential ceremony to sign a letter of intent to strengthen our city to city relationships and exchange of gifts. Minister Foster, representatives from QUB, University of Ulster and Glen Dimplex will also attend.

Following the visit to Belfast the delegation from Shenyang will travel on to Dublin.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 Staff from the European Unit who lead on international affairs relating to China and will head up this work. No funding is needed in relation to the visit of the Mayor of Shenyang. £1,000 is requested from the International Relations budget to expand on initial plans to host the inward delegation from Hefei.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 It is recommended that £1,000 is approved to expand on initial plans for the inward visit from Hefei to include

meetings with city stakeholders to follow up on discussions held in Hefei.

Follow up actions will be undertaken with Council staff and city stakeholders to promote links with Hefei for the benefit of the city in areas which support our international relations strategy, education, leisure tourism and business.

Shenyang

The Committee is asked to note the potential which exists to sign a letter of intent to strengthen our city to city relationship.”

During discussion, the Director informed the Committee that the mayoral visit from Chenyang, which had been scheduled for 22nd November, might be postponed until a later date. The Committee agreed, however, that the Lord Mayor meet the Mayor of Shenyang and sign a letter of intent to strengthen relationships between both cities when that meeting would take place.

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that a further report be submitted to Committee in January for its consideration which would outline in detail the Council's future options in respect of its international relationship with China.

Eurocities Culture Forum 2014

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on the work which had been carried out to date, in conjunction with Derry City Council, in the joint corporate bid to host the Eurocities Cultural Forum in 2014.

Manifesta

The Committee was reminded that Manifesta was a biennial exhibition of contemporary art and that the Council, in conjunction with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Derry City Council, was in the process of developing a combined bid to host the event in 2016. The Director reported that, should that bid be successful, it was estimated that the benefit to the region would be approximately £2.5 million. He indicated that, as part of the preparatory work for the bid, which would be presented to the organisers in March, 2014, it had been proposed that a further economic appraisal be carried out to assess the commercial viability of the bid and to consider whether further options existed to attract a world class artistic event to Northern Ireland. The cost of the additional work, he reported, would be £15,000, and each of the three bodies would contribute £5,000 each.

The Committee agreed to contribute £5,000 towards the costs associated with the economic appraisal.

Community Centres - Early Years

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At the Council meeting on 1 October it was agreed a report would be made to the Development Committee following an urgent review of all the council's community centres to ascertain if groups hosting early year's provision were compliant with legal requirements.**
- 1.2 Immediate action was taken with community centres identifying whether or not there was early year provision/ groups or services operating and registered with social services. This was classified as early years' provision for under 5 years where groups/ services are responsible for the care of children. Given parents / guardians are in attendance, by default this does not include parent and toddler groups.**
- 1.3 Once a scheme offers more than 2 hours of child care provision it falls into registered provision and there are three categories of childcare setting required to register with trusts: childminders, full day care and sessional day care.**
- 1.4 All community centres confirmed by 22 October that there was either no early year's provision or any provision which was present was registered with social services.**
- 1.5 Where groups have chosen to offer early years provision in community centres they must register the venue with social services. This triggers an assessment by Social Services as to the suitability of the venue as part of the provision. A venue is assessed as part of a general application by an early years' provider. The majority of the provision in our council community centres falls into the third category, we have therefore included the additional criteria for sessional day care.**
- 1.6 The council currently has 12 community centres which have been assessed and recognised as registered venues with social services given they have been hired for this purpose by external early years providers.**
- 1.7 Booking conditions for the community centre clearly state (item 4b) the hirer must ensure all events are conducted in a safe and responsible manner and in accordance with all relevant regulations.**

2 Key Issues

2.1 Booking conditions

The hirer of community centres is responsible for ensuring they meet all relevant regulations as noted on the Conditions of Hire detailed in the application for booking.

2.2 Legal opinion on whether or not the current booking terms and conditions need strengthened for safeguarding requirements was sought. They recommend that the Council should take steps to make sure the Social Services registration, and therefore the regulatory requirements, is evidenced at the time of booking; otherwise the Council would be exposing itself to reputational risk.

2.3 It is further recommended that our conditions of booking specify that compliance with the relevant legal requirements for the provision of care/services is a mandatory condition of use.

2.4 The Service is currently refreshing its booking forms and will incorporate this recommendation into the new pro-forma.

2.5 The Council's safeguarding responsibilities

To support the Council's safeguarding of children in council venues the Play Development Officer is devising a 'safeguarding children' checklist for community centres and across council for officers to reference if they are taking bookings from organisations offering early years provision. The checklist will also support community centre led programmed activities. It will include a definition of what is early years and when a service needs to be registered etc.

2.6 This checklist is currently being developed and will be issued in November 2013.

3 Recommendations

3.1 Members are requested to note the contents of the report which:

1. Confirms the council's community centres are currently compliant when hosting early years' provision.

2. Outline additional steps to support compliance:

a) Update community centre booking forms to ensure we stipulate the formal requirements for those providing

early years care/services which must be met as mandatory conditions of contract

- b) Introduce a safeguarding checklist to support council officers when a booking for early years' provision is received to allow this to be assessed and rejected if non-compliant."**

After discussion, during which the Community Services Manager clarified a number of Members' queries and undertook to submit information in respect of the figures which had been recorded for the Olympia Leisure Centre, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Super Connected Communities - IT Infrastructure Update

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update in respect of the Super Connected Communities project and the steps which would be taken to implement the future stages of the scheme.

Asset Transfer and Ethical Property Development

The Committee noted the contents of a report which outlined the principal findings of a study which had been commissioned by the Council in respect of the above-mentioned subject. It was noted that invitations to the launch of the study on 10th December would be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

Community Centres Quality and Performance Management

The Committee considered the contents of a report which provided an update on the analysis and the key findings which had been established through a customer satisfaction survey which had been carried out on users of the Council's community centres.

After discussion, during which the Community Services Manager clarified a number of issues in respect of the upkeep and cyclical maintenance of community centres, the Committee noted the progress which had been achieved in improving service delivery against the key performance indicators.

Departmental Plan

The Committee considered the quarterly update on the Departmental Plan for the period ending 30th September, 2013. The Director clarified a number of issues relating to the Plan and undertook to update Members in on various aspects therein, specifically in respect of the administrative support which would be put in place by the Council to oversee the Super Connected Belfast initiative.

Noted.

Quarterly Finance Report - Quarter Two

The Committee noted the contents of the Department's Quarterly Financial Report for the period 1st July till 30th September, 2013.

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls

The Director provided an overview of the performance figures for both the Waterfront and Ulster Halls for the six-month period from 1st April till 30th September, 2013. He outlined the programme of events which had been staged at both venues during that period and provided figures in respect of the income derived through conference and box office sales.

The Director indicated that, despite the prevailing economic climate, the gross turnover for both venues had increased by £94,000, and he provided an update on the current status of the capital project which would oversee the provision of enhanced conference facilities at the Waterfront Hall.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Belfast Waterfront Hall - Catering Contract

The Director reminded the Committee that the construction work to incorporate conference facilities within the Belfast Waterfront Hall was due to commence in June, 2014. He pointed out that the undertaking of the work would necessitate the formulation of an amended operational plan for the venue and, as such, the extent and requirements for a catering service at the site were as yet unknown. He pointed out that, in light of such circumstances, he had consulted with the Council's Legal Services Section and it had been indicated to him that, under the provisions which existed within Standing Order 62a, it would be appropriate to extend the current contract with Mount Charles Catering for a maximum of one-year in order to permit the undertaking of a tendering exercise which would seek to appoint a suitably-appointed contractor for the provision of restaurant and bar services commencing in late November, 2014.

The Committee agreed to extend, under the circumstances as set out under Standing Order 62a, the contract with Mount Charles Catering until 30th November, 2014, and granted authority to the Director to undertake a tendering exercise and to appoint a suitably-qualified contractor to provide the services at the venue thereafter.

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 £26,744.67 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.

After discussion, during which the Director undertook to provide a Member with an overview of the Council's debt management procedures, the Committee granted the authority sought.