

Development Committee

Tuesday, 18th March, 2014

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Stalford);
Aldermen Ekin and Stoker;
Councillors Beattie, Convery, Garrett,
Keenan, Kennedy, Kingston, Kyle,
Magee, Mac Giolla Mhóin, Ó Donnghaile,
Reynolds, Spence, Verner and Webb.

In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;
Ms. C. Taggart, Community Services Manager; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Apology

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Austin and Kelly.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 30th January and 18th February were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd March.

Declaration of Interest

In respect of item 4(g), viz., 'European Social Fund – Match Funding Requests', Councillor Ó Donnghaile indicated that he was employed by an organisation which worked in conjunction with one of the Trust's which had been recommended for funding.

Meeting of the Committee in May

The Committee noted that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 21st February, had, given that the Local Government Elections were due to take place on 22nd May, agreed that all Committee meetings in May should be cancelled.

The Committee agreed not to hold any meetings in May and agreed further that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Party Leaders and the Chairman of the Strategic Policy and Resources and, if necessary, the Chairman of the Development Committees, to take any pressing decisions in accordance with the procedures which were routinely set in place during the recess month of July each year.

Giro D'Italia

(Mr. G. Copeland, Events Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Events Manager provided an overview of the arrangements which had been put in place for the holding of the Giro d'Italia in Belfast on Friday 9th and Saturday, 10th May. He reminded Members that the event would start on both days at Titanic Belfast and finish at the City Hall. He outlined the principal aspects of the week-long festival which would run in conjunction with the race, which would include family entertainment, craft workshops and Italian-themed food events. He outlined also the communications plan which had been formulated to manage and promote the event, together with the traffic management arrangements which would be introduced to minimise disruption.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Visit Belfast

The Committee considered the undernoted report, together with a draft Business Plan for 2014/2015, a copy of which had been published on the Council's Mod.gov website:

"1 Background Information

- 1.1 Members are aware that Visit Belfast submit their Business Plan annually to Development Committee for approval. The plan covers the leisure marketing and business tourism activity undertaken by Visit Belfast, visitor servicing carried out by Belfast Welcome Centre in the city centre and at the two airports. This occurs to ensure that budgets and activity are in place by April to allow Visit Belfast to deliver activity in the new financial year.**
- 1.2 The draft Visit Belfast Business Plan is a one year operational marketing and visitor servicing plan. This is set against the context of a strategic review of Tourism within the City being led by Belfast City Council in partnership with the NITB. This review has commenced and is due for completion early in May. The review will examine all aspects of tourism activity and will heavily influence future activity undertaken by a number of key delivery agents within the City including Visit Belfast.**
- 1.3 Some specific examples of success to date include securing 60 cruise ships for 2014, generating £5.7m spend by leisure visitors through activity in the GB marketplace, securing conferences worth £37.7 million for the city and dealing with 534,515 enquiries via the 3 TICs. Areas under-performing include advertising equivalent from PR due to the lag time between press visits and coverage (therefore likely to reach targets by year end); and value of accommodation booking fees from conferences - delegates tend to negotiate better rates directly with hotels as there is no commission. Overall however Visit Belfast's performance has remained on target for 2013/14 period.**

- 1.4 The plan proposes targets and KPI's for 2014/15 on page 11. Key initiatives for 2014/15 include enhanced digital activity and adding value and focus on periods of low occupancy and the off season. In summary, through implementing this Business Plan, Visit Belfast will aim to generate £64.3 million spend in the local economy. The overall budget is £3.56 million of which £1,827,465 is requested from Council.
- 1.5 The 2014/15 Business Plan has been developed with input from Council officers. It is envisaged that there will be some degree of flexibility within the Visit Belfast Business plan to adopt some of the findings within the Tourism Strategy in the 2014-15 financial year.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Tourism Strategy which is due for completion early in May will provide a long term vision, strategy and associated action plans for the future of tourism in Belfast. This strategy will look at all aspects of tourism activity including delivery mechanisms to ensure value for money and the delivery of best practise.
- 2.2 In the incoming 2014/15 year the principles of the new strategy will start to be embedded by partners across the City both public and private sector. Officers have discussed with Visit Belfast the need for some flexibility in terms of adopting some of these concepts in the incoming year.
- 2.3 Part of the tourism strategy will look in-depth at monitoring and research, looking to European best practise models to provide accurate data in a timelier manner. This is fundamental in the long term business planning of tourism in the City.
- 2.4 NITB remains a key partner in the development of the new Tourism Strategy. The steering group for the strategy however also includes DETI, Visit Belfast and Tourism Ireland as well as senior staff in NITB and BCC.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 BVCB is requesting £1,827,465 towards 2014/15 plan. This has been included in departmental estimates."

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Mr. G. Lennon, Chief Executive, and Mr. D. Gavaghan, Chairman, representing Visit Belfast.

Mr. Lennon provided an overview of the work which Visit Belfast had undertaken during 2013 and outlined the principal aspects of the business plan which had been formulated for 2014/2015. In response to a question in respect of the new Welcome Centre in Donegall Square North, he indicated that, since it had been opened in December, 2013, retail sales had increased by 15%, while visitor numbers had risen by 8.5%, when compared to the same period in 2012. Mr. Lennon and Mr. Gavaghan outlined also the alternative funding arrangements which Visit Belfast would consider in future years which would place a greater emphasis on the private sector to contribute to the work of the organisation.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to provide the sum of £1,827,465 to Visit Belfast for the 2014/2015 financial year and endorsed the contents of its Business Plan for that period.

Departmental Plan for 2014/2015

The Director submitted for the Committee's approval the Development Departmental Plan for 2014/2015, a copy of which was published on the Council's Mod.gov system. He pointed out that the Plan had identified the key actions, events and initiatives which the Department would oversee in 2014/2015, and stated that it would enable the Committee to manage and monitor the work of the Department. He indicated that the Plan would assist Members and officers to make informed decisions and to allocate resources in line with departmental objectives and the Council's Investment Programme. In addition, he stated that the Plan would be reviewed throughout the financial year to ensure that it remained relevant to the Committee's priorities.

After discussion, the Committee endorsed the Departmental Plan for 2014/2015 and noted that periodic updates would be provided in respect thereto.

Lagan Trust

The Committee was reminded that Lagan Canal Restoration Trust had been established in 2006. In 2012, the Council had agreed to contribute a sum of £34,200 to the Trust over a two-year period, which would end on 31st March, 2014. The Director reported that a further request for assistance, in the sum of £17,640, had been received from the Trust for the financial year 2014/2015. He indicated that, should the Committee agree to provide funding to the Trust for a further year, it would enable an evaluation to be carried out on the future viability of the project.

The Committee was reminded also that the restoration of the Lagan Corridor had been identified as an emerging project within the Investment Programme. Therefore, within the context of the Reform of Local Government and the associated implications which that would have on the Council's boundary, it would be prudent for the Council to re-examine its support for, and involvement with, the Trust. Accordingly, he

recommended that the Committee accede to the request for funding for the financial year 2014/2015 on the basis outlined.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Ulster Scots Hub

The Director reported that the Ulster-Scots Agency, the Ulster-Scots Community Network and the Ministerial Advisory Group for an Ulster-Scots Academy, in conjunction with the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure, were in the process of developing a hub and heritage centre at the former Corn Exchange at the junction of Dunbar Link and Gordon Street. He indicated that a request had been received seeking a nominee from the Council to serve on the multi-agency partnership group which would be established to oversee the work of the project as it developed.

The Committee agreed that the Director, or his nominee, be authorised to represent the Council on the partnership group.

Lord Mayor's Forum

The Committee noted the contents of a report which outlined the programme of activities which take place on 28th March as part of the Forum, which would be hosted jointly by the Lord Mayors of both Belfast and Dublin, which would seek to promote business and tourism linkages between the two cities.

Retail Evaluation

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 The Development Committee at its meeting on the 20 June 2013 approved a range of support for the retail sector in the city – focused on neighbourhood retailing – and agreed that an evaluation of existing and previous council support for the sector should be undertaken in advance of any additional funding being provided in future years.**
- 1.2 Members will be aware that Belfast City Council supports businesses through a range of mechanisms and across a number of its services. In recent years the Economic Development Unit (EDU) has taken a lead in developing a targeted programme of support for a number of sectors, including the independent retail sector, based on business improvement, market development and enhancing footfall.**
- 1.3 The EDU-led programme of activity for the independent retail sector is now entering its fourth year. The current programme contains a range of interventions around targeted business**

start-up and growth, product development support and networking and promotion activity.

- 1.4 In order to evaluate the impact of the work to date and to identify the proposed approach for future interventions, taking account of ways to maximise the impact of the council's intervention, an independent evaluation was commissioned in December 2013. This evaluation has just been completed and the findings are presented in this report, alongside recommendations as to a proposed way forward for council support for retail.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The current retail action plan contains a range of activities including:

Business development support

- Master classes and best practice visits: 5 master classes have been delivered to date, involving 70 Belfast retailers
- Tailored mentoring support: 10 retail businesses have availed of this support
- Visual merchandising support: Belfast City Council undertook a joint initiative with interior design students from the University of Ulster to support 8 local retailers to re-design their shop front.

New retail and product development support

- Market start up programme including pop up facility: this programme is currently supporting 20 participants to establish their own food or craft business, providing them with test trading opportunities alongside mentoring and workshops. The pop up shop facility was open from the 27th February to 9th March at Queen Street Studios on Bedford Street.
- Introduction to retail programme – this programme is currently supporting 8 participants to develop the skills needed to establish a retail unit, providing them with test trading opportunities alongside mentoring and workshops. All 8 participants plan to set up in business.

City-wide retail networking and promotion

- Retail forum and information seminars: two meetings of the retail forum took place, chaired by the Chair of Development Committee. Attendees included traders' groups, BCCM and NIIRTA.
- Area Development support for traders groups: this providing funding for activities aimed at driving footfall to an area as well as enhancing the area's profile and supporting the sustainability of the group. This year 7 traders associations have drawn down support totalling £79,000 against a budget of £160,000. Examples of activities supported include; seasonal events, the production of marketing materials, design and print of newsletters, PR activities and consultancy support.

2.2 The terms of reference for the evaluation work included the following objectives:

- To quantify the overall benefits and impact of retail support activities for previous two financial years and assess the effectiveness of the individual element of the programme against objectives
- Make recommendations as to how current activity might be improved
- Consider how council support for retail businesses can be better coordinated
- Consider how impending structural changes might impact on the council's support for retail businesses
- Identify possible future areas of focus for the council to support the retail sector in Belfast, including an assessment of the financial implications of this activity.

2.3 The first stage of the evaluation analysed the quantitative impact of retail support and the extent to which targets were achieved. The second stage of the evaluation analysed the qualitative impact achieved through consultations with representatives from local traders associations, key stakeholders such as NIIRTA, BCCM, Belfast City Council Officers as well as participants who took part in retail programme activity.

Key findings from this research have identified;

- Business development interventions enabled through the retail programme and delivered by contracted

- delivery organisations are efficient and effective and have met or exceeded targets set
- Retail development programmes funded by council are high in cost relative to other business development programmes because they do not attract EU funding leverage and are therefore funded 100% by council
- The funding of Traders Associations through Economic Development is the only such 'umbrella body' type funding that exists
- The funding process for Area Development Support (to trader groups) lacks the rigour evident in other support interventions, given the difficulties in identifying local needs, base lining and benchmarking, objective and target setting
- The priority needs identified through the engagement with Traders Associations are significantly wider than the support available from the council's retail support interventions (e.g. parking issues, graffiti, refuse collection)
- While most Traders Associations are now charging a membership fee, they are still not sustainable at present – albeit that this was one of the original imperatives of early council intervention in these groups.

2.4 The evaluation also explored a wider range of issues impacting on retail support which has identified the following;

- ERDF and Invest Northern Ireland funding is not available for retail focused interventions. This means that the financial implications of funding this activity reside solely with Council. Engagement with invest NI and EU programmes has confirmed that this will continue to be the case for the new round of EU programmes (and that the match funding support for other business development activities will be up to 80% of eligible project costs)
- Direct business development support (mentoring, business workshops) can be delivered through the wider programme of support provided by the Economic Development Unit

- The neighbourhood-based nature of local area interventions such as (but not confined to) Traders Associations require a more joined-up approach which integrates support such as physical, environmental and infrastructure improvement. Channelling these through the Economic Development unit and focusing on marketing and promotional support only is somewhat at odds with broader needs identified by these groups
- There is a need for internal Belfast City Council co-ordination to optimise the channelling of council resources to businesses, including retail
- The BIDs, Area Based Working, Neighbourhood Renewal and Community Planning processes present opportunities for the council to provide leadership to ensure that the totality of areas' needs (including those of retailers and traders) are addressed holistically.

2.5 In analysing the broader policy context, the evaluation also identified the following issues:

- The draft Integrated Economic Strategy (IES) does not identify retail as a 'sector' requiring specific intervention. The strategy points out that contemporary policy is moving away from footfall-boosting approach (with an emphasis on promotional interventions) towards a broader view of how best to accommodate other usage within cities and localities such as office, leisure, education, tourism etc.
- Reform of Local Government (RPA) means from 2015 it is likely Belfast City Council will have an enhanced Neighbourhood Renewal role. Traders in specific neighbourhoods should benefit if this role is delivered effectively in a way which co-ordinates, integrates and targets council resources.
- The BIDs process presents an opportunity for area-based development with businesses as investors (therefore making this a more sustainable approach) agreeing a range of local activities and initiatives that can be delivered with an emphasis on the totality of that area's needs (e.g. footfall oriented promotions, business development support, environmental improvements, infrastructure improvements such as car parking etc.)

- The Local Investment Fund has an area based emphasis. There is potential to build on its current delivery by more strategically linking the needs of local areas (including those of retailers) to resources and funding streams.

2.6 Some of the key recommendations emerging from the report are as follows:

- Direct business development support for retailers (such as programmes aimed at improving competitiveness) can be funded through economic development on a discretionary basis and have some strategic validity
- Area-based interventions such as (but not confined to) Traders Associations should not be resourced uniquely through Economic Development given that the neighbourhood-based nature of these require a more joined-up approach which integrates support such as physical, environmental and infrastructure improvements. This involves the delivery of wider council services (such as building control, environmental health, street cleansing, commercial waste etc) as well as other agencies (Roads Service etc.)
- There is a need for a much more structured, rigorous and strategic process for traders support which starts with needs identification, SMART objectives, production of a structured implementation plan and robust monitoring and evaluation to assess efficiency and effectiveness/impact of delivery. At present, there is limited capacity within the groups to undertake this activity and analysis
- The BIDs, Area Based Working, Neighbourhood Renewal and Community Planning processes present opportunities for Belfast City Council to provide leadership to ensure that the totality of areas' needs (including those of retailers and traders) are addressed holistically. Clearly this role requires development and is beyond the scope of the economic development section.

2.7 Taking account of these findings, it is recommended that the following approach is adopted regarding council support in the coming financial year:

- There is significant rationalisation of support, with business growth support channelled through the Economic Development Unit's generic business growth programmes (and therefore eligible for match funding support from EU)
- Area development support for traders' groups is pared back to a level of up to £5,000 funding available without any match funding being offered by the group and up to a further £5,000 available if they can provide evidence of £ for £ match funding (i.e. a total maximum contribution of £10,000 from council). There should be a deadline for applications, with no applications for support accepted after end August 2014
- There should be no commitment to area development support beyond the current year and work should be undertaken within the council to consider how area support can be incorporated within wider area-based support across the council
- There should be a budgetary commitment for start-up and product development activity, based on evaluations of the current activity as well as best practice from other locations
- The retail forum should be retained as a vehicle for engagement with local groups, with consideration given as to how this can be incorporated as part of wider area working activities as well as council's engagement with the private sector
- Consideration should be given to how BCCM (and other partners) can be used as a conduit for better engagement with retail businesses in the city centre as well as exploring opportunities for addressing challenges such as vacant properties for retail use.

3 Resources

- £80,000 for trader group support; and
- £40,000 for targeted start-up and product development activity.

4 Recommendation

- **That future consideration should be given to a co-ordinated programme of activity within Council linking in with area working groups and other initiatives to ensure effective delivery of service and avoid duplication.”**

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and adopted the recommendation.

Festivals’ Forum

The Committee noted the contents of an update report and endorsed an associated Action Plan for 2014/2015 on the work of the Council’s Festivals’ Forum, which had been established to support and enhance the range of festivals across the City. It was noted that a copy of the Action Plan had been published on the Council’s Mod.gov website.

European Social Fund Match Funding Requests

(Councillor Ó Donnghaile remained outside the room whilst this matter was under consideration.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Background Information

- 1.1 Members will 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 The ESF projects are funded through Department of Employment and Learning (DEL). Match funding must be secured on an annual basis. These offers are based on the project being able to draw in the appropriate levels of match funding. All funding from DEL is subject to the agreed match funding being in place. Requests for match funding from five projects for the next financial year 2014-2015 have now been received by Belfast City Council. In addition, the council has led on a project and there is also a requirement to seek match funding for this project for the coming year. One of the projects (East Belfast Mission) has not yet submitted the match funding request to Belfast City Council. If this is forthcoming, it will be**

presented to a future meeting of the Development Committee for consideration.

1.3 At the March 2013 meeting of the Development Committee, Members agreed to provide match funding to the following ESF projects for 2013-2014:

- Belfast City Council with project partner Lisburn City Council – Hospitality and Retail Training and Employment (HARTE) £25,000;
- East Belfast Mission - Jobs4U £12,485;
- Lenadoon Community Forum - Neighbourhood Training for Employment £12,010; and
- Time Associates/Belfast Metropolitan College - Learn to Earn £6,000.

At the May 2013 meeting of the Development Committee, Members agreed to provide match funding to the following ESF projects for 2013-2014:

- Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDT) - Jobs on the Move £30,000;
- Ashton Community Trust - Progress to Employment £33,642.65; and
- Ashton Community Trust - Women's Training Project £13,856.02.

1.5 Members will recall from the May 2013 meeting that the original letters of offer from DEL were issued on the basis of a three-year programme. DEL wrote to all project promoters to confirm that they could offer funding to the approved projects for an additional year (2014-2015) should the project promoters wish to take this offer up. They also confirmed that they were in a position to offer an uplift of 25% in the funding available to interested projects. In both instances, offers were based on the project being able to draw in the appropriate levels of match funding.

1.6 Members will recall that the offer of 25% uplift has led to some projects having difficulty in being able to get agreement from their match funder to provide the additional funding to allow them to draw down the extra money from DEL.

1.7 Many Belfast-based ESF projects are match-funded by the Department of Social Development (DSD). The office confirmed that, while it is in a position to commit the match-funding at the previous levels of expenditure in the original letters of offer, it is not in a position to provide the match-funding for the

increased amount (i.e. to meet the 25% uplift offer from DEL). This remains the case for 2014-2015.

- 1.8 These offers are based on the project being able to draw in the appropriate levels of match funding. Without funding, the six programmes will be unable to operate.
- 1.9 Members will also be aware that officers have been engaging with DEL to identify a way in which the match funding provided by the council and other public sector bodies can be used to contribute to targeted delivery, as opposed to on a case-by-case basis as is currently the way of working. Some progress is being made in this regard and it is anticipated that this will help the council measure more directly the impact of our interventions of the key employment and skills challenges in the city.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The six projects that are seeking support from Belfast City Council for the next financial year 2014-2015 are:

- Ashton Community Trust: Women's Training Project
- Ashton Community Trust: Progress to Employment
- Lenadoon Community Forum – Neighbourhood Training for Employment
- Time Associates/Belfast Metropolitan College – Learn to Earn
- Upper Springfield Development Trust – Jobs on the Move
- Belfast City Council – HARTE

2.2 Ashton Community Trust – Women's Training Project

The Women's Training Project focuses on improving the employability of those women experiencing significant employment gaps, lone parents, those returning to the labour market and women with little or no qualifications. The project aims to offer women training which will increase basic and intermediate skills and a mentor to support clients through one-to-one support and advice and guidance. There is also a team member employed to support those not in employment, education and training (NEET). This was introduced as part of the match funding provided through council.

- 2.3 In the first three quarters of 2013-2014, 124 participants received accredited training and 38 went into employment of which 15 were NEETs clients. Outputs for the period 2014-2015

are envisaged to remain the same figures and the programme will continue to work with NEET clients.

- 2.4 The amount of funding offered by DEL to Women's Training Project in the 2014-2015 financial year (including the uplift) is £101,461. At present, DSD have committed to providing match funding of £38,868.98. This leaves a shortfall of £13,856.02 to allow the full amount to be drawn down.

2.5 Ashton Community Trust – Progress to Employment project

The Progress to Employment programme provides participants with access to accredited training and resources that will improve their skills and improve their chances of a more sustainable future in employment. It focuses on training to match participants' skills with employer's requirements. A mentor further supports clients through one-to-one support and advice and guidance.

- 2.6 In the first three quarters of the financial year 2013-2014, 314 participants availed of training and support, 121 undertook accredited training and 96 entered into employment (40 were NEET clients), surpassing targets set. Outputs for the period 2014-2015 are projected to remain the same as 2013-2014. The programme will continue to target the NEET category.

- 2.7 It is envisaged that the targets will be maintained for the final year of the project. A match funding request of £33,642.65 has been received by Belfast City Council to contribute to the project, which has an overall value of £373,850 for the coming financial year.

2.8 Lenadoon Community Forum - Neighbourhood Training for Employment

The progress report received from Lenadoon Community Forum indicates that the project is on course to achieve its targets in terms of engaging with individuals and placing them into employment, training or further education. Participants have undertaken courses in Numeracy and Literacy Levels 2 (GCSE grade C equivalent), Text/Word Processing Suite Levels 1-3, Business Administration, Sage Payroll Level 2, Computerised Payroll Levels 1 and 2. To date this year, 265 people have been recruited, 163 have gained recognised qualifications, 28 have gone into further education and 22 into employment. Outputs for the coming year are expected to remain in line with the results delivered in the current year.

2.9 In April 2014 after four years decanted to various sites, the Lenadoon Community Forum will move into a new building and the Training For Employment Project will be operate in a brand new IT suite and training room. This is a good opportunity to engage new participants and bring together services such as childcare and counselling under one roof. As well as serving Lenadoon residents, participants who have availed of services in the past reside in the Suffolk and Dunmurry communities. The new building is adjacent to the interface and this will ensure greater access to services for residents from all sections of the community.

2.10 In order to roll out the training support in this coming financial year, the project promoters have asked the council to provide match funding of £12,010 towards a project with an overall value of £124,000.

2.11 Time Associates/Belfast Metropolitan College – Learn to Earn

Time Associates' 2013-2014 progress report to date indicates that the Learn to Earn project engaged with 43 participants (annual target 32). Of these, 14 found employment or went into self-employment and the participants amassed a total of 162 qualifications as part of their engagement in the programme. These include CCEA Exploring Enterprise; ILM Team Leader Award, CIEH Food Hygiene and Health Safety certificate. The project is on course to achieving all project outputs and in the quarter four forecasts, a further 50 qualifications will bring the total to 212. This year also seen the project expand its employer engagement activities with strong links being established with the Ten Square group and Odyssey Arena.

2.12 In the coming financial year, project promoters anticipate that they will recruit at least 32 participants who will collectively achieve in excess of 150 qualifications. 14 of the participants will find employment and 10 will go into further education. In order to achieve these results, they are seeking match funding of £6,000 from Belfast City Council.

2.13 Upper Springfield Development Trust – Jobs on the Move

The progress report received from USDT indicates that the project is on course to exceed its targets in terms of engaging with individuals and placing them into employment. Project promoters have worked with 265 individuals, helping 48 into employment and an additional 105 have undertaken accredited training up to December 2013.

2.14 Within this financial year, a number of participants have undertaken work placement and training with the council as part of pre-recruitment programmes. Eight posts have been ring-fenced for individuals from that group (recruited following a competitive interview process). Client completed 'Roots to Wings' programme with Hendersons, Strive to Work pre-employment programme with First Source and Stream and undertook work placements with Marks & Spencer, negotiation of work placements as part of the employability working group with Belfast HSC Trust.

2.15 In the coming year, it is planned that the project will provide one-to-one mentoring and support to 300 participants, helping at least 10% of those find employment within the project. Match funding from council of £30,000 is being sought for this project, as a contribution to a project with an overall value of £246,462.

2.16 Belfast City Council/Lisburn City Council – HARTE

Between April and December 2013, 41 participants completed the HARTE programme. 41 people gained employment (figures include some people from year two of the programme who have just received employment), 32 people gained Level Two qualifications in industry recognised fields such as customer care, health and safety, food hygiene, World Host and team leadership. Participants have gone on to 'next steps' training including 'service of food at a table' and 'preparing and serving wines'.

2.17 In August 2013 to coincide with the World Police and Fire Games, 14 trainees from the HARTE programme took up the challenge of running HARTE@theMET pop up restaurant at the Belfast Met Titanic Quarter Campus. Programme participants were involved in all aspects of this intervention which included marketing, menu preparation and planning. Trainees cooked and served over 900 'covers'. They put to use the hospitality skills that they received training in including good customer service, catering and beverage services.

2.18 As a result of this valuable work experience, six people have gained full-time employment. A new relationship was formed with the Odyssey Arena who organised a recruitment drive for past and present HARTE participants. Seven participants gained part-time casual employment.

2.19 From April 2011 to December 2013, HARTE has performed strongly against targets as per letter of offer with DEL and the

agreement with Belfast City Council It shows that HARTE has surpassed its target in six areas. There are strong mentoring, employer engagement and job search elements in the HARTE programme. Contact is maintained not only with participants on the current year of a programme, but also with past HARTE participants. They are contacted and invited to attend interviews with employers when opportunities arise. This ensures that participants receive help and support they need to progress in the labour market. This service comes at no additional cost to the project.

2.20 In the coming year, four HARTE programmes are planned, 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 will require match funding of £25,000 from Belfast City Council for the coming year, with £15,000 coming from Lisburn City Council. The overall project cost is £142,000.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 The total match funding requirements for the projects in the coming financial year are £120,508.67.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to provide match-funding to:

- Women's Training Project: £13,856.02
- Progress to Employment: £33,642.65
- Neighbourhood Training for Employment: £12,010
- Learn2earn: £6,000
- Jobs on the Move: £30,000
- HARTE: £25,000"

The Committee adopted the recommendations and noted that a report would be submitted in due course which would outline a range of options on how the scope of the scheme could be enhanced to attract additional applicants from across the City.

Belfast Business Awards

The Director reported that a request for funding in the sum of £10,000 had been received from the organisers of the 2014 Belfast Business Awards. He reminded the Committee that the awards were delivered by Belfast City Centre Management and, should the Committee accede to the request, the Council would be afforded a range of benefits, including significant publicity and networking opportunities.

A Member reminded the Committee that it had agreed in 2013 not to provide funding towards the awards. That decision had been taken since there existed a plethora

of similar-type events and it would be prudent for the Council to assess the benefits which had been accrued in providing funding in previous years.

Accordingly, it was

Moved by Councillor Reynolds,
Seconded by Councillor Webb,

That the Committee agrees not to accede to the request for funding.

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

Spring Continental Market

The Committee was advised that the counts associated with the Local Government Elections would be held in the City Hall on 23rd and 24th May. As such, the annual Spring Continental Market had been rescheduled and would take place from Friday, 16th till Monday, 19th May inclusive. The Director pointed out that the rescheduling had meant that the market would not be able to operate on the Bank Holiday Monday, 26th May, which was traditionally its busiest day. The Director recommended, therefore, that, as a goodwill gesture to traders, the market be permitted to operate on an additional day, that is, Thursday, 15th May.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Former Visteon Site - Feasibility Study

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Background Information

- 1.1 Following a meetings with various groups, Councillor Attwood has requested that the Council commission a Feasibility Study for the former Ford Visteon Site on Black's Road. The purpose of the feasibility study is to consider the optimal use of the site to support future city development.**
- 1.2 In support of the request, the member highlighted that the Minister of Enterprise Trade and Investment on 20 January 2014, stated:**

'The situation with land that is zoned for economic development is this, and Invest NI is very clear on the issue, and this is what we will be saying to the Minister of the Environment, the planning department or whoever comes to us for advice: we are generally opposed to the loss of land that is being used, or was last used, for industry to non-industrial users. That is our policy.'

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 In 2007, outline planning permission was granted for a proposed mixed use scheme on part of the site (Z/2006/2339/O). Approval of reserved matters was granted in September 2009 for 210 residential units and a business park development consisting of 3,345sqm of class B uses (Z/2008/0803/RM). Both applications have now expired.
- 2.2 The current planning application was submitted to the DOE on 11 December 2013 for development of the site. The proposal involves demolition of existing buildings and proposed comprehensive mixed-use development comprising 244 social and private/affordable residential units (with access from Black's Road) with associated public open space /linear park. The proposal also involves a non-residential element comprising of a community centre and class B1b/B1c/B2 uses (call centre, research and development, and light industrial uses) with associated parking and access from Finaghy Road North.
- 2.3 The site is zoned as existing business/industry in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015. However, the PAC report following the draft BMAP Public Local Inquiry recommended that site is left un-zoned as white lands.
- 2.4 In light of the site's planning history and the uncertainty around its future zoning, it is suggested that a broader feasibility study would allow consideration of what could be the optimal use of the site with a broader range of alternative explored in the context of the wider industrial / commercial land supply across the city.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 No specific allocation for this type of study was included within the 2014-15 Department budgets. Provision could be made from currently unallocated BMAP budgets should the Committee resolve to support the feasibility proposal.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are requested to consider the potential to commission a feasibility study of the potential for alternative uses for the Visteon Site."

The Committee agreed to commission a feasibility study as outlined at a cost not to exceed £15,000. It was agreed also that officers from within the Department would

liaise with representatives from other bodies and agencies with a view to establishing a co-ordinated approach to any feasibility study conducted in relation to the site.

Consultation Response

Economic Activity

The Committee was advised that the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department for Enterprise Trade and Investment, in partnership with the Department for Social Development, Invest NI and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, had issued for consultation a strategic framework document which sought to co-ordinate a strategy to tackle economic inactivity.

The framework, which was entitled 'Enabling Success', sought to support individuals seeking employment and to create a diverse, skilled and active working-age population. Its strategic objective was to establish the conditions which would enable an employment rate of over 70% to be achieved by 2023. That aim would be achieved through a reduction in the proportion of the working-age population classified as economically inactive.

The Committee endorsed the response, a full copy of which was available on the Council's Mod.gov website.

Review of Apprenticeships

The Committee was advised that the Department for Employment and Learning had issued for consultation a review document which outlined a number of proposed changes to the current apprenticeships' scheme, a full copy of the response was published on the Council's Mod.gov website.

The Director reported that the proposals which had been outlined within the document represented a significant departure from current arrangements. He pointed out that the review had re-evaluated the pre-requisite educational requirements for eligibility under the apprenticeships' scheme and had proposed that it should be aimed specifically at individuals who had attained educational achievements at 'Level 3', that is, the equivalent of 'A' Levels, or above.

The Committee endorsed the Council's response, subject to it being amended to reflect the following in respect of question three, viz., "*Do you agree that the apprenticeships system should commence at 'Level 3' and above?*"

"The Council would not be supportive of any measure which would seek to exclude a significant proportion of the local population on the basis of educational attainment. The Council is opposed to any amendment to the current apprenticeships scheme which would seek to discriminate purely on the basis of educational attainment."

Eurocities - Update

Annual Subscription

The Director reminded the Committee that the Council had been a member of the Eurocities Network since the early 1990s. He outlined the benefits which membership of that network had brought to the Council and how it had been able to influence and contribute to policy debate within the European Commission and Parliament. He reported that the Council's annual membership subscription to that network for the financial year 2014/2015 would be €15,820 and pointed out that this figure had remained unchanged since 2009. Accordingly, he sought the Committee's authority to pay the subscription as outlined.

The Committee granted the authority sought.

Annual Conference

The Director informed the Committee that the annual Eurocities Conference would take place in Munich from 5th till 7th November. He explained that the theme for the event would be 'Sustainable Cities' and provided an overview of the keynote speakers, together with the range of topics which would be explored at the various sessions and workshops. He added that the highlight of the conference, which would be attended by over 400 delegates, would be the Mayors' Debate which would explore the issue of political renewal in cities. He indicated that the conference would provide valuable opportunities for the Council's representatives to discuss with key partners the range of funding opportunities which could be applied for through future European initiatives.

The Committee authorised the attendance at the conference of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, together with the Director, or their nominees, the total cost of which would be approximately £4,000.

Northern Ireland Assembly Barroso Task Force Working Group

The Committee endorsed a response to the above-mentioned matter, which related to the work which had been undertaken by the Barroso Task Force Working Group to improve Northern Ireland's economic competitiveness and to create sustainable employment. A full copy of that response was available on the Council's Mod.gov Website.

Halifax Inward Visit

The Committee was advised that the Lord Mayor would be hosting the Mayor of Halifax, Nova Scotia, Mr. J. Savage, between 3rd and 5th April. The Director reported that the visit of Mayor Savage, who was originally from Belfast, would present an opportunity to promote links between Belfast and North America and, as part of that visit, a number of political and business meetings had been arranged to foster co-operation with the City of Halifax. The keynote event of the visit would be a formal dinner/reception

in the Belfast Castle, which would be hosted by the Lord Mayor, for the delegation and key business leaders.

The Committee agreed to contribute £5,000 for the provision of hospitality during the Mayor's visit.

New York - Business Mission

The Committee was advised that the Lord Mayor would be leading, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Chamber of Trade and Commerce, a trade mission to New York, on a date to be determined in May, to coincide with the annual New York/New Belfast Conference. The Director reported that the visit would seek to enhance trade links between North York and Belfast and would present an opportunity to promote Belfast's reputation as a destination for inward investment. The Director outlined also the range of key political and business leaders who would host meetings with the Lord Mayor. Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree to authorise the attendance of an officer on the visit to provide administrative support for the Lord Mayor. It was noted that the Lord Mayor would undertake the visit at no cost to the Council.

The Committee agreed that the Director (or his nominee) be authorised to accompany the Lord Mayor on the New York visit at a cost not to exceed £2,500.

Shenyang Inward Visit

The Director reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 20th August, 2013, it had agreed that, as part of the Council's International Relations Strategy, it should seek to strengthen the linkages between Belfast and the City of Shenyang in China. He indicated that a request has been received from Shenyang requesting that the Council consider hosting a delegation of senior officials in July, 2014. The delegation from Shenyang would seek to establish and enhance opportunities for inward and outward investment between the two cities. As part of the itinerary for the visit, the delegation would be received by the Council's civic dignitaries, together with a range of key business people from throughout the City.

The Director sought the Committee's permission to incur expenditure in the sum of £3,000 towards the hospitality costs associated with the hosting the delegation, provision for which had been made within the Department's budgets.

The Committee granted the authority which had been sought.

Social Sofas - Public Art Proposal

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At the December meeting, Councillor Beattie outlined plans for the production of a community mosaic artwork, 'Social**

- 1.2 sofas', within the Beechmount area. Committee agreed that officers from within the Development Department would undertake an update to be submitted to a future meeting.
- 1.2 'Social sofa' sculptures are large concrete benches covered in a mosaic designed and made by an artist in partnership with local community groups. The aim of the project, which started in the Netherlands and has been rolled out in Holland and China, is to create functional and attractive public seating that can become a meeting point for local residents.
- 1.3 Officers from the Tourism, Culture and Arts (TCA) Unit have carried out further research in to the feasibility of this project, including the option to extend the project across the city. The findings of this research are detailed below.

2 Key Issues

2.1 Budget

It is estimated that the cost of developing, commissioning, fabricating and installing one sofa is £18,700, made up of £4,800 for commissioning and £13,900 for production.

- 2.2 Economies of scale mean that some savings can be made by delivering a citywide project. The total cost of five sofas would be £84,400, made up of £18,400 for commissioning and £66,000 for production.

2.3 Funding

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) has indicated that the project would not be suitable for Re-imaging funding, which offers up to 100 per cent of projects costs and was the original, intended funding source. However, ACNI has indicated that it may be suitable for their general public art funding, which is due to open imminently.

- 2.4 ACNI funding must follow a two-stage best practice delivery model:

- Stage 1: Commissioning. The minimum grant available is £10,001, and the maximum is £25,000.
- Stage 2: Production. The minimum grant available is £10,001, and the maximum is £75,000.

- 2.5 Applications from public sector bodies such as the Council need to demonstrate a minimum of 50 per cent in-cash partnership funding. Applications made by voluntary and community organisations need to demonstrate a minimum of between 10 and 25 per cent partnership funding depending on the amount of funding applied for.

2.6 Delivery mechanism

The Council's Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit does not have the resources to directly deliver public art projects, and the cost of hiring a public art coordinator is included in costs.

- 2.7** Social sofas is a trademarked concept. Best practice and the terms and conditions of ACNI funding require that the artists are procured by select or open competition. In order to widen the number of artists and increase competition and the quality of responses, it is recommended that the artist's brief be widened to include all artist-led street furniture.

2.8 Stakeholders

A number of arts and community organisations have already expressed an interest in this project including Belfast Conflict Resolution Centre, Upper Springfield Development Trust, the Spectrum Centre and Community Arts Partnership.

- 2.9** A number of agencies across Belfast, including the PSNI, have raised concerns to public seating as it may encourage loitering and anti-social behaviour. However, if founded on robust community consultation and engagement and with careful selection of sites, it is felt that this project could engender ownership and mitigate against anti-social behaviour.

2.10 Maintenance, liability and insurance

There are two options for the ownership of the sculpture(s):

1. The sculpture is owned by the partner community group, which is responsible for maintenance, liability, insurance and permissions. In most cases, planning permission will be required for installation on ground not owned or maintained by the Council.
2. The sculpture is owned by the Council. Maintenance requirements can be specified in the project brief and applications can be assessed against this, minimising cost. This is option is most feasible if the sculpture is to be placed on Council-owned and -maintained land, for example, parks. It is unlikely the sculpture would therefore require planning permission.

2.11 Options

The requirement for 50 per cent match funding and a minimum available grant of £10,001 means that the Council could not apply for funding for one sofa or for the

commissioning cost of five sofas (the cost is less than £20,000 in both cases).

- 2.12 The Council could apply for funding for the production of five sofas. The contribution required from the Council would be £51,400 (£18,400 for commissioning and £33,000 match funding for the production).
- 2.13 The Council could appoint a suitably qualified external organisation to develop and deliver the programme. The successful contractor would be responsible for sourcing additional funding. A commitment of a minimum of £4,220 would help lever the remaining funding from ACNI.
- 2.14 The Council could work with interested community groups to develop applications for funding. Projects may apply for match revenue funding from the Council via the arts and heritage project fund.
- 2.15 A detailed exploration of options is included at appendix 1. The preferred option is option 4: Council contracts a third-party to develop the project.
- 2.16 It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and agree the preferred option.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

A range of options are presented at appendix 1. The preferred option would cost £5,000 which is included in the 2014/15 draft budget estimates.

3.2 Human Resources

Depending on the option selected, the majority of the work load would be outsourced to a third party. Ongoing advice and guidance could be offered within the TCA Unit's current work plan.

3.3 Assets

Depending on the location and ownership of the sculpture(s), the assets may be owned by the Council, which would be responsible for ongoing revenue costs.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

- 4.1 Equality and good relations implications in relation to this policy are still under consideration. Further updates will be sent to the Equality and Diversity Officer in due course.

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and agree the preferred option.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development

(All members of staff present at the meeting, with the exception of the Director and the Democratic Services Officer, remained outside the room whilst this item was under discussion.)

With the permission of the Committee, the Director tabled a report which sought its authority to undertake, by way of an internal trawl, a recruitment exercise for the appointment for the post of Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development, on a twelve month interim basis. He reminded the Committee that the previous post-holder had left the Council on 10th March and, after consulting with the Corporate Management Team, it had been deemed advisable to seek to fill the post on the terms outlined.

The Committee granted approval to the Director to commence a recruitment exercise for the post and agreed that the selection panel would comprise of the Chairman (Councillor Hargey) and the Deputy Chairman (Councillor Spence), together with Councillor Webb, the Director of Development and one other Director. The Committee delegated authority also to the selection panel to appoint a suitable candidate at the conclusion of that process.

Chairman