

# Development Committee

Tuesday, 17th June, 2014

## MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);  
Aldermen Campbell, Ekin, Kingston, Stalford  
and Webb;  
Councillors Convery, Kelly, Kyle, Ó Donnghaile,  
Reynolds, Spence and Verner.

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

(The Deputy Chairman (Councillor Spence) in the Chair.)

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Beattie, Kennedy, Mac Giolla Mhín and Ó Muilleoir.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 15th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st May.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Regarding item 4., viz., 'Belfast City Centre Management – Funding Request', Councillors Hargey and Spence indicated that they were both members of the management board of that organisation. It was noted that both Members had been nominated by the Council to represent it on that body.

### **Smithfield and Union Presentation**

Pursuant to the Committee's decision of 15th April, the Deputy Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr. F. McElhatton, Mr. L. McComish and Mr. S. Golden, together with a deputation of traders from the Smithfield and Union area, who were in attendance to provide a presentation in respect of the future development plans for the area and to request that the Council agree to recognise formally the Smithfield and Union area as a distinct quarter within Belfast.

Mr. McElhatton outlined the history of the area and the aims and objectives of the Smithfield and Union organisation. He pointed out that the area was one of the oldest within the City and outlined the key role it played as a gateway to both the Cathedral

Quarter and the North Belfast Cultural Corridor. Particularly, he indicated that the organisation sought:

- to support and develop a unique brand for the Smithfield and Union area;
- to promote the area as a distinct shopping and visitor attraction; and
- to improve the overall attractiveness of the area.

He indicated that the Smithfield and Union area ran from Smithfield Market to Frederick Street and contained some of Belfast's oldest and most iconic buildings, including the Belfast Central Library, St. Patrick's Catholic Church and the Clifton Street Poor House. He outlined the potential for the area in light of the development of the new campus by the University of Ulster at York Street and suggested that such a development would lead to an influx of businesses into the area which would enhance further its potential. He concluded by requesting that the Council agree to recognise formally the Smithfield and Union area as a distinct quarter within Belfast. The members of the deputation answered a range of questions and then retired from the meeting.

After discussion, during which various Members commended the work of the Smithfield and Union organisation, the Committee agreed to recognise formally the existence of Smithfield and Union as a distinct quarter within the City and agreed further that the Council should seek to promote the area within any of its official maps or literature.

### **Cinemagic - Request for Funding**

The Director advised the Committee that a request had been received from Cinemagic seeking a donation from the Council to assist it to meet a £200,000 funding shortfall which it had encountered in the making of a Belfast-themed feature film entitled: 'The Christmas Star'. The Director reported that no provision existed within the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit's budget for 2014/2015, but pointed out that officers from within that Unit would continue to provide guidance and assistance to Cinemagic in exploring alternative sources of funding.

The Committee agreed not to accede to the request and noted the comments of the Director.

### **Integrated Economic Strategy**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 The Integrated Economic Strategy (IES) Belfast sets out the key strategic aspirations and priorities for Belfast City Council, Invest NI and its partners in respect of the economic growth and prosperity of the city council area. The strategy is for the period 2015-2020 and has been prepared by Oxford Economics,**

Morrow Gilchrist Associates, Colin Stutt Consulting and Locus following extensive consultations.

1.2 The consultants have engaged with Elected Members in the course of the strategy development and have produced a number of papers to articulate key issues arising. These papers include:

1. **Economic and Policy Synopsis:** This report provides context and analysis for the IES. It provides an overview of the footprint of Belfast post Local Government Reform (LGR) using current data. It provides a statistical understanding of potential opportunities and challenges. Further analysis refers to the city under its current boundary (due to data limitations). This includes economic profiling, baselining and an economic analysis of the city, evaluating it against other cities within the UK and Europe. The Economic and Policy Synopsis also considers the implications of EU, NI and City Level policies and strategies to ensure the IES consolidates a shared vision and ambition.
2. **Integrated Economic Strategy Document:** This is the primary document and is split into three parts. Part 1 identifies emerging issues, opportunities and choices for Belfast identified through consultations and the economic and policy synopsis. Part 2 articulates themes for the strategic development of the city 2015 – 2020.
3. **City Narrative:** This document helps articulate a narrative to capture the unique offer of Belfast as a business and investment location.
4. **Terms of Reference for a possible Citywide Economic Partnership:** This document develops the concept of a collaborative leadership model to focus and guide the city's economic growth. It recognises the need for this approach to be directly aligned to the Council's community planning agenda post-LGR.

## 2 Key Issues

2.1 It has always been considered that the broad approach and priority areas identified in the IES would become the economic development strand of Belfast City Council's Community Plan post-LGR. While there is still some lack of clarity around future EU funding for economic development activity, it is highly likely

that the proposals around sector specialisation and a focus on business start-up and growth will meet both European and national policy objectives. These will be reflected in the work programme for the Economic Development Unit, working with other partners across Belfast. The IES thematic areas take consideration of this.

**2.2 The IES strategic framework identifies thematic opportunities for the city to become:**

- A competitive and internationally connected city;
- A learning city developing the knowledge and skills of its people;
- A people centred and inclusive city, actively linking need with economic opportunity;
- A sustainable city with its own distinctive development approach;
- An accountable city with an inclusive, participative and transparent partnership for economic development.

**2.3 The IES does not include a project specific action plan and has no official tangible targets, given that the Citywide Economic Partnership Terms of Reference has not been adopted by partners and the partnership has not yet convened. Once potential partners come together and share their agendas, a combined set of targets can be established aligned to a pre-agreed annual action plan. The Integrated Economic Strategy Stage 1 economic and policy synopsis report provided an assessment of the current and future performance of Belfast. In the absence of official targets for the IES it is proposed that future success is measured against the current performance of the economy and the baseline forecast trajectory set out in the report.**

**2.5 In order to work towards a final version of the IES, Members had previously agreed that a consultation exercise would be undertaken once a draft document was available. A summary narrative of the strategic framework and the implementation plan will act as the public consultation document supported by a series of questions which will help frame the information gathered through the consultation exercise.**

**2.6 Given that this strategy has been developed in conjunction with Invest NI, it is important for them to endorse the content through their internal processes and we will work in tandem to ensure that this happens within the same timeframes. It is envisaged that the IES consultation will take place over the**

summer subject to review and agreement by Invest NI and positive equality screening.

- 2.7 In parallel, as part of the Economic Development Unit's LGR Work Plan, work will be undertaken to consider how the Citywide Economic Partnership can be established, taking account of the commitment to establishing a partnership to oversee the delivery of the wider community plan and the need to avoid duplication of effort.

### 3 Recommendations

- To endorse the Draft Integrated Economic Strategy within the Strategic Framework, Implementation Plan and benchmark economic metrics;
- To agree to commence a public consultation subject to endorsement by Invest NI."

(The Chairman (Councillor Hargey) in the Chair.)

During discussion, a Member indicated that he felt that the Strategy, as presented, might not have been as comprehensive as had been envisaged. He suggested that, prior to endorsing the document, an action plan could be formulated to enhance the scope of the strategy and to ensure its successful implementation.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that an action plan, which would be formulated prior to the public consultation exercise, be presented for consideration at its meeting in August.

### Belfast City Centre Management Additional Funding Requests

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 14th January, it had agreed to provide funding in the sum of £190,000 to Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) as the Council's contribution towards its running costs for 2014/2015. It was reported that the Board of BCCM had since undertaken a review of the salaries of its staff and had adopted the NJC scales, a measure which had resulted in a shortfall of £30,000 in salary costs for £2014/2015. Accordingly, the Director reported that a request for financial assistance for 50% of the shortfall, that is, £15,000, had been received from BCCM.

In addition to the aforementioned request, the Director reminded the Committee that BCCM had been one of six successful applicants selected by the Department for Social Development to oversee a pilot Business Improvement District (BID) project. He reported that BCCM had requested also that the Council consider making a contribution towards the employment of a Development Manager to oversee the implementation of that project. The total cost of employing the Development Manager, over an 18 month period, would be £90,000 and the Council had been requested to consider providing 50% of that cost.

In respect of the request by BCCM for a contribution towards meeting the re-evaluated staff salary costs, Members expressed concern that the Council, should it accede to the request, would be creating a precedent which could encourage further organisations to submit one-off requests for funding. The point was made that employees within the public sector had been subject to pay freezes in recent years and BCCM should have anticipated the extra costs and incorporated them within their original request for annual funding. Therefore, it would be inappropriate for the Council to meet the request as submitted.

Regarding the request for funding for to employ a Business Manager for the BID pilot project, the Committee noted that the Department for Social Development had agreed to contribute a sum of £45,000 towards the post. Accordingly, the Council would be required to provide funding of £15,000 in 2014/2015, with a further amount of £30,000 being allocated within the Council's 2015/2016 budget to support the project.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Ekin,  
Seconded by Alderman Webb and

Resolved - That the Committee agrees not to accede to the request for £15,000 from BCCM to meet the increase in costs of staff salaries; but agrees to provide funding in the sum of £45,000, over a two-year period, to meet the costs associated with the employment of a Business Manager to oversee that organisation's BID pilot project.

### **Northern Ireland Science Festival**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **1 Key Issues**

- 1.1 Numerous cities now include science festivals as part of their programme of city events, using these as a way of generating footfall in the city but also assisting in profiling the city as a centre for technology and economic growth. In Derry/Londonderry, the city has recently invested in the high profile CultureTech event and this was a flagship event in the City of Culture programme in 2013, albeit that the focus was more on culture and technology. A follow-up event is planned for this year.**
- 1.2 The vision for the Northern Ireland Science Festival is to showcase science, technology, engineering and maths as a central part of our culture and society. Statistics suggest that there is a considerable mismatch between the number of young people studying these subjects at school and the demand from employers for staff with this educational background.**

- 1.3 It is intended that the event will act as a focal point for partners to demonstrate the best of what they do, while at the same time raising awareness among young people of the opportunities available to them in these fields. In addition, it is intended that the event can act as an anchor in the branding of Belfast as a 'smart city' and one in which technology supports and drives its daily operation and its future growth.
- 1.4 One of the key themes emerging from the draft Integrated Tourism Strategy is the opportunity to celebrate innovations that have their roots in Belfast and Northern Ireland and to build tourism products around these. Titanic Belfast has done much to draw out the message of the maritime and industrial history of the city. However there is an opportunity to build new narratives around the city's scientific heritage, linking to the ongoing work in that field today, through institutions such as the two universities. This will also support the drive to grow the business tourism in the city, with a visible commitment to that growth through investment in the expanded Waterfront Hall.
- 1.5 There is also an opportunity to link the Science Festival into some additional events that are being planned by NI Screen and Generator NI around this time, regarding opportunities to exploit the business and tourism potential of music and its convergence with digital media and new technologies. These events aim to re-profile Belfast as a dynamic city with an emerging economy and niche offer for both businesses and tourists.
- 1.6 The event is being organised by a company with charitable status called Science Festival NI. Its board consists of representatives from twelve organisations including the two local universities, Northern Ireland Science Park, Institute of Physics, Institute of Engineering and Technology and Open University.
- 1.7 At present the organisation is in the process of finalising its programme and tying down sponsorship to cover the costs of programming and delivery. It has a target of around £120,000 to be secured from sponsorship to make the event happen. It has secured a principal partner at this stage – the Department for Employment and Learning – and the Minister in that department has confirmed sponsorship of £50,000 towards the event. This is to be spent mainly on programming and promotion of the event and is linked to their priorities around promoting STEM.

- 1.8 The organisers have a target of 10,000 participants over the course of the 10 day programme. While many of the activities are still being finalised, it is expected that there will be at least 50 events taking place across the city under the NI Science Festival banner. As an indicative overview of the types of events that might take place in the course of the festival, the organisers have identified a number of key themes, including:
- Words and ideas – series of talks and lectures on scientific issues impacting on our everyday lives.
  - Bright Sparks – series of events focused on young people.
  - Science in Sound – using the world-renowned Sonic Arts Research Centre (SARC) at Queen’s – one of only four of its kind in the world – these events will look at the latest innovations in sound technology.
  - Science in Film – working with Queen’s Film Theatre to profile key films with a scientific slant.
  - Health and wellbeing – looking at how science is impacting on healthcare and what we can expect to be the next generation of innovation in this field, focusing on the innovations generated in Belfast.
  - Our digital society – focusing on issues such as cyber security and coding, offering the opportunity to profile what a super-connected Belfast will look like.
- 2.9 Organisers are planning a number of keynote events during the course of the programme. These include the 2015 Turing lecture – a world-leading event presenting a topic from current research in computer science and delivered by an acknowledged expert in the field. The lecture is named in honour of Alan Turing the globally renowned computer scientist and code-breaker. The Turing lecture regularly attracts up to 400 delegates and is broadcast live online. The event has never before been held in Northern Ireland. The organisers have bid to host the event in 2015 as part of the first NI Science Festival and are currently awaiting a decision on this (decision expected imminently).
- 2.10 One of the major priorities for the festival will be to undertake events in local communities, in conjunction with schools. In addition, they are seeking to partner with some key media organisations in order to raise the profile of the event locally and nationally and to link into national campaigns to make science interesting to young people in particular. It is planned that there will be a number of programmes produced



that will be broadcast online and available on the web, post-event.

- 2.11 We are also engaging with CultureTech to explore opportunities for a 'Big Video Challenge' involving all post-primary schools in Belfast. Through this challenge, young people will work in teams to produce a short video on an agreed topic. There will be a very specific STEM angle to the videos and we will use the Science Festival platform to showcase the work created as part of the challenge.
- 2.12 Given the linkages with the emerging integrated economic strategy and the integrated tourism strategy, and the opportunities that the event presents to get young people involved and to bring people into the city as part of developing a new narrative for Belfast, it is proposed that the council commits sponsorship of £35,000 towards the inaugural event. £25,000 will be made available from the Economic Development Unit (EDU) budget and £10,000 will be made available from Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit (TCA).

### **3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Approve the request to commit sponsorship of £35,000 towards the event, to be identified from within existing budgets for this year."

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **NI Connections**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 As one of the key actions within the Councils International Framework to attract foreign direct investment, tourism and talent, the Council has engaged with key stakeholders in the city to shape and support our international marketing work. One of these stakeholders is Invest NI and its NI Connections organisation.
- 1.2 NI Connections is a recently established organisation championed by Minister Arlene Foster, with the aim of developing and growing the support of people with a connection to Northern Ireland by birth, family, education or business. It is a not for profit public/private organisation which has been established to make use of Invest NI's systems, but to

act as fully independent, and be managed by its governing council via a supervisory board made up of sponsors and subscribers.

**1.3 The organisation's objectives are:**

- to promote means for improved collaboration of diaspora consumers
- methods to engage the strategic diaspora strategies to unlock the cultural diaspora market and mechanisms to support and remain connected with the recent Diaspora.

**1.4 Essentially NI Connections is a marketing and communications organisation that exists to create engagement with the NI diaspora worldwide, to send a consistent message in terms of our tourism, investment and educational opportunities.**

**1.5 Belfast City Council (BCC) was invited as a sponsor to NI Connections in December 2012, and subsequently joined with the approval of Members at an annual cost of £30,000, for a period of three years, after which a review was to be undertaken of benefits and outputs for the Council.**

**1.6 The Council was given a place on the NI Connections board to guide the strategic direction of the organisation. Development Committee members saw this as an opportunity to influence the strategic direction of NI Connections, and to engage with a wider diaspora with other NI organisations and to leverage their contacts and relationships and goodwill in other international destinations and markets of interest to Council.**

**1.7 It was deemed that membership of NI Connections would allow Council the following benefits:**

- Strategic alliances with other key international stakeholders in the city
- An opportunity to develop a Belfast connections sub set of the network
- An opportunity to develop the Belfast ask list for NI diaspora
- Marketing of the Councils information and good news stories to the NI diaspora
- Develop lucrative links with NI diaspora
- Participation in NI Connections events throughout the world
- Cooperation of NI Connections council at BCC events

- Leverage of the Council's investment in diaspora relationships and opportunity to build on the synergies that exist with others in NI.

1.8 Actively participating in NI Connections is only one action within the Belfast International Relations Framework, and provides Council with an effective tool in marketing the city internationally and utilising NI and Belfast diaspora across the world.

## 2 Key Issues

2.1 NI Connections has now completed its pilot phase and is entering its delivery phase, having built up the strong network of 1700 plus members across the world. It has set out targets for the next two years which are outlined in the attached report.

### 2.2 Going Forward

Having been a member of NI Connections network for over a year, Officers have assessed the above benefits and the added value of remaining in the network at the annual cost of £30,000.

2.3 Members will be aware that Council has ramped up its international relations work and has delivered many activities in the last 18 months in the trade sectors of investment, tourism and education within the targeted markets of North America, Europe, India and China.

2.4 Given the growing level of activity that Council is delivering within the International Relations Framework with new initiatives such as Belfast Boston Sister Cities, the MOU with Shenyang, the UKIERI project in India and the many other planned activities, Officers have evaluated the benefits of the NI Connections annual subscription.

2.5 It is therefore felt that an annual subscription of £30,000 is excessive. Having discussed this with NI Connections, BCC has been offered a more basic level of membership at a cost of £6,000 per annum subject to review.

2.6 This would allow Council to continue being promoted as a member, and to make up the financial shortfall it has been proposed that BCC directly involve NI Connections in its outward and inward activities as an opportunity in kind for NI Connections and its members as a whole. An example of this would be to involve NI Connections in the autumn BCC tech

mission to the west coast of the USA and to brand an event within the mission as NI Connections.

- 2.7 The most significant benefit which NI Connections can offer BCC is to actively target the diaspora to attract conferences to the new Conference Centre at the Waterfront Hall which is due to open in May 2016. BCC and Visit Belfast are working proactively to place this on the NI Connections agenda.
- 2.8 BCC would remain a member, benefiting from social media opportunities and maintaining roles on the tourism and investment sub groups. Members are asked to consider this report and agree to a reduced members' subscription of £6,000 pending review in one year.

## **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1 To pay the reduced membership fee of £6,000 for the period 2014-2015 pending a review in one year.”

Discussion ensued in respect of the 'Friends of Belfast' network and it was suggested that that organisation needed to be re-established in order to co-ordinate any International Framework for the City. It was noted that a report in this regard would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **European Union Regional Forum**

The Committee noted an update in respect of the Council's participation in the Northern Ireland/European Union Regional Forum, which was funded by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. It was agreed that the Council would seek to procure a managed-service to deliver the project on its behalf and agreed also that the Committee be represented, on 26th June, by the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman at a showcase event to highlight the achievements of the Forum to date.

### **Update on the Lord Mayors' Forum**

The Committee considered the undernoted report

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

- 1.1 The Council agreed in January to support an event on 28 March which explored the potential of the Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor Initiative. Further to several research reports produced over the last 2 decades, there is now a new opportunity to build on the strength of the geographical area between both cities, utilising the concentration of demographic,

economic, educational, infrastructural, social and cultural resources that exists along the eastern seaboard.

## **2 Key Issues**

2.1 The Lord Mayor and the Lord Mayor of Dublin led on championing this initiative designed to boost efforts to attract and expand trade and investment opportunities across all sectors. The initiative forms part of both cities internationalisation strategies promoting the Corridor as a place to locate, start or grow a business with strong characteristics of a skilled, well educated talent pool and well established networks of support for company development.

2.2 In order to activate the commitment of both councils, the one day Leadership Forum was organised by Dublin and Belfast City Councils. The Forum started in Dublin and moved to Belfast later in the day, symbolically travelling along the Corridor on the Enterprise train. The overall focus of the event was on how business, tourism and government can collaborate along the Corridor to strengthen links and operate as a powerhouse to maximise potential and attract further investment. It is proposed that the conclusions of the Forum will lead to the manifestation of an action plan to animate the Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor, supported by a public commitment from both Councils in the form of a possible Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

## **2.3 Objectives**

- To revive and re-ignite the attention for, and interest in, the Corridor as a hub for trade and investment.
- To highlight the economic potential of this geographical area and secure commitment to driving it forward.
- To strengthen links between key players in business, education and government along the Corridor.
- To investigate potential collaborative actions between stakeholders within the Corridor area.

## **Outcomes of Leadership Forum**

2.4 KPMG attended the Leadership Forum in order to capture key points made during the event by the participants. The event took the form of a discussion forum, with keynote speakers outlining their thoughts of how the Corridor could be developed and encouraging attendees from public, private and voluntary sectors to highlight opportunities and challenges from their own perspectives.

- 2.5 The themes explored during the Forum by the keynote speakers and attendees included smart technology, sustainability, tourism, infrastructure and the creative industries. The actions proposed are outlined in the KPMG document attached as an appendix to this report.
- 2.6 The report documents six potential areas of activity that emerged during the course of the event;
- Breaking down barriers to travel
  - Cross border education
  - A new 'Enterprise' train
  - 'Trade not aid'
  - The Belfast/Dublin electric car route
  - Collaboration between tourist boards; and
    - What has prevented it happening to date?
    - What impact the action could have on the economic corridor if it were to be implemented?
    - Who are the lead players to make it happen?; and
    - What are the resource implications actions.

#### **Next steps**

- 2.8 It is proposed that Belfast and Dublin Council Officers meet to agree a way forward and develop a joint action plan on the 6 key themes; including engaging stakeholders across the sectors to lead on actions where appropriate.

### **3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications at this stage. Staff resources to develop the action plan will in the first instance, come from the Council's European Unit. A fully budgeted action plan will be presented for agreement by Members in due course.

### **4 Recommendations**

- 4.1 It is recommended that Committee agree to committing to a Memorandum of Understanding with Dublin City Council and to the development of a budgeted action plan to be returned to committee for approval in due course."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Confirmation of Belfast/India Project**

The Committee was reminded that the Council's International Relations Framework sought to establish and promote trade, education and tourism opportunities in new and emerging markets worldwide. The Director reported that the Council, in conjunction with the Belfast Metropolitan College and The Queen's University of Belfast, had been successful in an application for funding for a project under the UK and India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI). The project, which would be entitled: 'Building Organisational Efficiencies for Small and Medium Enterprises', would run from 2014 to 2016 and would commence with an inward visit to Belfast in August by the Mumbai Chamber of Commerce.

The Director indicated that that project would seek to build capacity within small and medium enterprises within Belfast and enable local companies to compete effectively within the Indian market. He added that, whilst the scheme would be funded by UKIERI and administered by The British Council, the Council would be required to allocate a sum of £15,000 from its international budget to assist in the development of a showcase event and to undertake an outward mission as part of the project.

The Committee agreed to contribute £15,000 towards the project as outlined.

### **Belfast/Boston Sister Cities Relationship**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Former Lord Mayor and the European Manager travelled to New York and Boston to foster strong trade, education and tourism links in the North American market in March 2014. During this visit it became evident that there was a real interest at the highest political level to promote trade and investment and develop closer ties with Belfast.**
- 1.2 At the Committee in April, Members agreed that the City of Belfast should enter into a Sister Cities Agreement to foster real actions and opportunities between both cities in the areas of:**
  - Economic development, trade and investment**
  - Tourism**
  - Cultural exchange**
  - Faith based exchange and educational linkages.**
- 1.3 The Sister Cities Agreement was subsequently signed in Boston by the Lord Mayor of Belfast and the Mayor of Boston, Martin Walsh on 12 May 2014.**

## **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1** The former Lord Mayor has suggested that in order to progress the Sister Cities relationship, that a Belfast Boston voluntary board is established in each city with a cross sectoral membership including political representatives.
- 2.2** The aim of the board would be to oversee the development and delivery of an action plan, and to work in partnership with the Sister Cities International organisation to deliver on the commitments of a meaningful Sister Cities relationship. Members are asked to consider the establishment of a board and the necessary resources to support the board, alongside the development and delivery of an action plan.
- 2.3** The Development Committee at its meeting in April this year, also agreed to host the Massachusetts State Senate President, Therese Murray during her visit to Northern Ireland in September 2014. President Murray is fully supportive of a Belfast/Boston Sister Cities relationship and fully endorsed the recent signing of the agreement. President Murray and the Health Minister Edwin Poots have already put in place a Memorandum of Understanding between Boston and Northern Ireland on connected health issues. She will be in Belfast in September 2014 as part of a political programme and business mission to Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It is anticipated that she will be accompanied by Congressman Richard Neal, and potentially the Mayor of Boston, Martin Walsh.
- 2.4** This visit presents an opportunity to explore in more detail potential actions around the agreed thematic areas of the Sister Cities Agreement, namely;
- Economic development, trade and investment
  - Tourism
  - Cultural exchange
  - Faith based exchange and educational linkages.
- 2.5** Given the fact that a MOU already exists, on connected health issues, this presents be an opportunity for Belfast health bodies, research institutions and businesses, to look to Boston/Massachusetts for strategic partnerships, or investment.
- 2.6** The 5th EU/US E Health Marketplace and Conference, which takes place in Boston on 21-22 October 2014, will bring together Global connected health innovators, public officials and business leaders as part of the Connected Health Week in



**Boston. Members may wish to consider the potential benefits of participating in this event.**

**The programme will include:**

- **Business-to-business meetings;**
- **Collaboration sessions focused on research, economic growth and innovative start-up companies;**
- **Regional tour opportunities of Massachusetts incubator sites and innovation centres; &**
- **Exhibitions featuring connected health products, services and demonstrations.**

**2.7 The conference and connected meetings will facilitate the further development of the E health and ICT sector for Belfast as well as establishing strong US relations through the International Framework.**

### **3 Resource Implications**

**3.1 It is anticipated that the cost of participating in the EU/US E Health Marketplace and Conference with attendance by the Lord Mayor, Chair and Deputy Chairs of the Development Committee or their nominees, plus an Officer will not exceed £10,000. The budget for hosting Senator Murray has already been approved at a maximum of £5,000 by Members of the Development Committee. The cost of the development and delivery of a Belfast Boston Sister Cities action plan along with staff resources is still to be determined and will be brought to Committee in due course.**

### **4 Recommendations**

- **To approve the development of a budgeted Belfast Boston Sister Cities action plan to the satisfaction of the Development committee;**
- **To establish a voluntary Belfast Boston Sister Cities Board in each city to oversee and monitor the development and delivery of the action plan; and**
- **To authorise the attendance of the Lord Mayor, the Chair and Deputy Chair, or their nominees, along with an officer at the EU/US E-Health Marketplace and Conference at a maximum cost of £10,000.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **International Relations - Update**

The Committee noted an update in respect of the work which had been undertaken in respect of the development of an International Relations Framework and

noted that a revised document would be completed and presented for consideration in the autumn of 2014.

Noted.

### **HMS Duncan**

The Committee was advised that HMS Duncan, to which, in 2008, the Council had agreed that it would become affiliated with, would be arriving in Belfast on the morning of Saturday, 26th July, and would depart on Tuesday, 29th July. The Director outlined the logistical arrangements which would be put in place in order to enable the public to undertake visits to the ship and requested the Committee's authority for expenditure in the sum of a £2,000 to enable the provision of shuttle buses to allow the access to the ship from the City centre.

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **Core City Regeneration and Investment Framework**

The Committee noted a report which provided an update on the progress achieved to date in the formulation of the Belfast Core City Regeneration and Investment Framework, which was due to be presented to the Committee in the autumn of 2014.

### **Visual Arts Infrastructure**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 Members will be aware that at the Committee gave approval to support a feasibility study into visual arts infrastructure in the city. This research was jointly commissioned with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) and examined a proposal to relocate a number of independent organisations in one building creating a hub and contemporary gallery space for Belfast.**

#### **1.2 Cultural Framework for Belfast**

**As Members will also be aware, the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012–15 was agreed at September 2012 Development Committee and published in October 2012. Its vision is that:-**

***'By 2020, everyone in Belfast experiences and is inspired by our city's diverse and distinctive culture and arts. Arts and heritage are valued for enriching quality of life and creating wealth, and the city's culture and creativity is renowned throughout the world.'***

1.3 The Cultural Framework complements the Investment Programme, which recognises arts and heritage as key drivers of the city's economy. It was developed in consultation with the arts and heritage sectors, and the Council's approach has been cited as best practice. Its aims are arranged under four themes – Distinctly Belfast, Inspiring communities, Attracting audiences and Strengthening the sector – and its targets include:

- increasing audiences from Belfast by 10 per cent
- growing visiting audiences from 15 to 25 per cent
- establishing a strong, skilled, multifaceted arts and heritage infrastructure
- generating £8 in income for every £1 invested in the sector.

1.4 As part of an ongoing commitment outlined within the Framework, Council has undertaken a leadership role on the strategic alignment and co-ordination of the culture and arts sector, providing opportunities for organisations to develop and diversify their income streams and promoting partnership working and collaboration.

## 2 Key Issues

2.1 The initial feasibility study has now been completed and has recommended that the proposal for a contemporary visual arts hub and gallery proceed to economic appraisal.

2.2 Following comparative analysis with UK cities, it has been identified that Belfast needs to look at the future provision of visual culture in order to compete nationally and internationally, including options of a hub and flagship venue. Work to date has identified these developments as critical drivers for culture, tourism and regeneration in the city.

2.3 This economic appraisal would respond to the city's need for destination venues and the sector's need for shared resources to best use funding available. The aim is not just to provide a world class visitor destination, but also to represent the artists, creative industries practitioners and craftspeople living and working in Belfast as well as addressing the shortage of temporary exhibition space in the city that currently limits opportunities to attract international events.

2.4 It is anticipated that the economic appraisal will focus on establishing a business case that would include:

- The relocation of Golden Thread Gallery
- A large-scale contemporary art gallery
- A permanent collection of Art from the late 1960's to the present
- A mixed-use space: community and outreach
- Cultural Cinema: 4 screen art-house cinema
- Café/bar
- Retail space
- Office accommodation external use
- Office accommodation internal use
- Storage

## **2.5 Artist Studios**

A separate challenge to the future of visual arts in Belfast has been identified as the state of artist studios and one of the city's current studio providers, Flax Arts has approached Council for partnership funding to support a feasibility study. Funding from ACNI has been secured to examine the shortage of studio provision in the city with existing studios offering poor working conditions and long waiting lists. The study would respond to the city's need for self sustaining fit for purpose artist studios. Flax Art Studios would act as the lead organisation working in partnership with potential stakeholders including: Orchid Studios, University of Ulster and other studio providers. The feasibility study will identify the need for the best solution and future sustainability for the city and examine potential options across Belfast focusing on the regeneration of existing sites and buildings.

2.6 Initial research has been conducted into best practice studio provision examining comparative models in Dublin, Glasgow and London. The study will build on this research to present options to address long term sustainability issues in Belfast.

## **3 Resource Implications**

### **3.1 Financial**

A total financial commitment of £14,000 consisting of £9,000 towards an economic appraisal for a contemporary visual arts hub/gallery and £5,000 towards a feasibility study into the state of studio provision in the city to be found from within TCA budget for 14/15.

The total combined budget would be £31,000 with ACNI contributing £17,000.

**5 Recommendation**

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Committee authorises expenditure in the sum of £14,000 to support an economic appraisal for a contemporary visual arts hub and gallery and to support a feasibility study for studio provision in the city.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

**Renewing the Routes Programme**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1 Background Information**

- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide updates and seek approval for a number of proposals linked to the council and additional ongoing programmes. The updates are in respect of:**

- Progress of works under our current agreed programme in Oldpark and Stewartstown Roads
- Progress on the DSD funded local regeneration programme on Lower Ormeau Road incorporating Cormac Street and Newtownards Road

- 1.4 Following on from the programme approved in February 2012, Committee support is sought in relation to the specific local regeneration action plans for Lisburn Road and Castlereagh Road areas as presented in Appendix 2.**

**2 Key Issues**

**2.1 Oldpark Rd and Andersonstown Rd**

**In May 2013, Development Committee approved the Local Regeneration Plans for Oldpark Road (Torrens Avenue to Cliftondene Crescent) and Andersonstown Road (Hillhead Crescent to Suffolk Road). Due to issues with implementing the contract the work programme has been delayed. It is anticipated work will complete in autumn 2014.**

- 2.2 On site work has commenced on Oldpark Road where 26 units have been identified for improvements. Boundary improvement scheme to include new fencing work has completed to the car sales yard. New signage to the pedestrian gates is proposed to add value to the newly refurbished Millennium Park. An environmental improvement**

scheme to potentially include a feature lighting scheme is being planned for the Moravian Church.

- 2.3 The programme is also on site on Andersonstown Road (Node 4: Stewartstown Road from Hillhead Crescent to Suffolk Road) where a number of commercial businesses are undergoing frontage upgrades. In partnership with our Tourism, Culture and Art's Unit, an extension of the visitors signage network will be developed with a sign to be located outside St John the Baptist Church. This will complement the environmental improvement work currently underway to the boundary walls and railings of category B listed Church. A joint improvement scheme at the Hunting Lodge is also being planned to enhance the local environment through an upgrade of the boundary walls, railings and gates. This will complement the work and investment currently being undertaken by the premises owners.
- 2.4 Officers continue regular contact with Department of Regional Development (DRD) and their consultants Amey Consultancy surrounding the proposed enabling measures to facilitate the introduction of an additional bus lane along the Stewartstown Road. This will result in carriageway widening for several areas with footways and street lighting also being reconfigured.
- 2.5 As Members will be aware, following ongoing discussions with Amey and DRD, it has been confirmed that two of the potential environmental projects have been affected by the realignment of the carriageway. As a result of Amey/DRD negotiations over land acquisition and vesting, the Council will not be able to enter into legal agreements with the landowners on these projects. The projects affected are:
- the proposed environmental improvement scheme at Hillhead Crescent and,
  - the environmental improvement scheme and railing works along the Stewartstown Road.
- 2.6 As part of the ongoing consultation exercise, we have already engaged with property owners for the alternative projects and a number of alternative schemes from the Action Plan have been proposed including additional commercial units, and environmental improvements schemes at Suffolk Library and Suffolk Day Centre.

**2.7 Newtownards Road and Ormeau Road Council Programme**

Integrated Regeneration Plans for Newtownards Road (from Bridge End to Witham Street) and Ormeau Road (from Ormeau Embankment to Ravenhill Road Roundabout) were approved in August 2012.

- 2.8** The completion of these initiatives in the agreed Actions Plans was achieved within the agreed allocations and an underspend has been identified allowing additional units to be targeted under the commercial improvement programme on both roads.

**2.9 Cromac Street/Lower Ormeau Road and Newtownards Road**

Work is nearing completion on the DSD funded local regeneration programme on lower Ormeau Road incorporating Cromac Street. The £155,000 investment in the area has benefitted the cosmetic enhancement of 40 units with complementary environmental improvement schemes to the Arena Building, H&J Martin boundary and an area of vacant green space on the corner of Cooke Street.

- 2.10** Construction work commenced in late autumn 2013 for the DSD funded units on the Newtownards Road (Bridge End to Welland Street) and has resulted in a further 38 businesses receiving cosmetic improvements. As part of the wider local regeneration activity on the road, a number of vacant sites were identified and council worked along with local stakeholders, statutory partners and council departments to address the issues presented by the underutilised areas. As part of this scoping work, a key site at the junction of Templemore Avenue and Newtownards Road was identified and hoarding installed to improve the corner.

**2.11 2014/15 (Lisburn Road/ Castlereagh Road)**

Since approval in February 2012, work has continued on the development of plans for the agreed target areas. Extensive scoping and engagement work with relevant statutory and community contacts, including elected representatives for the area was carried out as part of the plan development process.

- 2.12** The proposed plans for Lisburn Road and Castlereagh Road also identify a longer list of additional projects that could form the basis for further work should increased resources become available (through external sources currently being actively

pursued with potential project partners) or modifications are required for existing plans.

2.13 The key common themes emerging from the scoping work with local Councillors and stakeholders were identified as:

- *Environmental improvements* - major issues facing the routes are dereliction or under used property and often poor general environments; requiring action to ensure improvements that can complement other developments;
- *Heritage* – the roads contain elements of historical or cultural significance that offer the opportunity to develop these local assets through architectural lighting, interpretive signage and heritage projects;
- *Commercial improvements* – focus areas have been identified along the routes; the areas are hubs of activity with local shops, services and facilities serving the community. The commercial improvements will focus on improving the environment within these areas for residents, businesses and visitors;
- *Environmental management works* - Targeted and sustained clean-up and graffiti removal campaigns working with local groups;
- *Collaborative and partnership work* - essential in maximising finite budgets, particularly with a joined-up approach to external funding opportunities with statutory agencies. The underlying objective is to maximise the impact of the Council's own contribution through internal joint working and external partnership opportunities alongside community safety, parks and leisure, economic development, building control, tourism and the arts and cleansing services.

### 3 Recommendations

- To note the progress re: the DSD funded local regeneration programme on Lower Ormeau Road incorporating Cromac Street and on Newtownards Road; and
- Endorse the Action Plans for the 2013/15 programme on Lisburn Road (Bradbury Place to Tates Avenue) and Castlereagh Road (Beersbridge Road to Grand Parade/Ladas Drive)."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.



### **Review of the Departmental Plan - Quarter 4**

The Committee noted the progress which had been achieved to date in respect of the Departmental Plan for 2013/2014.

### **2013/2014 Finance Report - Quarter 4**

The Committee noted the progress which had been achieved to date in respect of the Departmental Plan for 2013/2014.

### **Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls - Performance Report**

The Director provided an overview of the performance figures for both the Waterfront and Ulster Halls for the period from 1st April, 2013 till 31st March, 2014. 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. In addition, he outlined the enhanced marketing and promotion which would be undertaken by staff in advance of the opening of the new conference and exhibition facilities at the Waterfront Hall.

Noted.

### **Markets Staffing - Review**

The Committee authorised the undertaking of a review of the future staffing requirements and structure for the Council's Markets Unit.

### **External Market Applications**

The Committee was reminded that the 'Fine and Dandy' company had been granted permission to operate a small market in the Crescent Arts Centre on the last Sunday of each month until December, 2013. Due to the popularity of the market, the Committee had, at its meeting in November, 2013, extended that arrangement until the end of July, 2014. The Director reported that the company had requested a further extension to that agreement with the Council.

The Committee agreed to extend the market licence to 'Fine and Dandy' for a period of three years ending on 31st July, 2017.

### **St. Patrick's Day Celebrations - Post Event Report**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

##### **1.1 The purpose of this report is to:**

- **Provide feedback to Councillors on the 2014 St Patrick's Celebrations.**

- Seek guidance on events for 2015 with special reference to the date for the Council's main parade and concert.
- 1.2 In May 2013 Members agreed to move the main council St Patrick's parade and concert to the nearest Sunday to St Patrick's Day rather than on the 17th March. The rationale behind the move was based on the resources connected to events on the 17th March especially in regard to the carnival element. In addition the move was seen as assisting in attracting visitors to the city given that St Patrick's Day is not a public holiday in Belfast. The shift was also deemed to assist the council's St Patrick's events to stand out in its marketing given the prevalence of activities elsewhere on the 17th March.
- 1.3 The 2014 programme of activity created by the council included a parade and concert, alongside events run by the Ulster and Waterfront Halls. In addition to this Members agreed to host the annual Ullans Academy St Patrick's Day Breakfast at City Hall and promote the New York based Sober St Patrick's Day initiative. The following are the key statistics generated by the concert and parade events:
- Total cost to council was £140,000 (£40,000 less than 2013 due to budget constraints)
  - It is estimated that 23,000 people attended the event (8,000 concert attendees over three hours and an audience of 15,000 for the parade). This figure is very similar to 2013.
  - Estimated economic return of over £508,000. Again very similar to 2013.
  - Return on council's investment of £3.62 for every £1.00 invested. This is slightly higher, but is due to the reduced 2014 budget.
  - 7% of attendees were out-of-state (9% in 2013), 33% (33% in 2013) outside Belfast and 60% (60% in 2013) from the Greater Belfast area
  - An average positive rating of 71% for the overall event was given
  - It is estimated that 55% (51% in 2013), of attending were from a:
    - Catholic background; 26% Protestant (no change from 2013) and 19% from other backgrounds (22% in 2013).
    - Just over half (53%) agreed that the St Patrick's Celebrations should be held on a Sunday however a proportion disagreed especially amongst the 55+ age group.

**2 Key Issues**

**2.1 Members are being asked to give guidance to whether a similar family orientated programme should be delivered in March 2015. The programme would be based on many of the activities highlighted including the annual Ullans Academy St Patrick's Day Breakfast and the Sober St Patrick's Day initiative. However, Members are also being asked if they wish to continue with the format that would see the annual parade and concert operating on the nearest Sunday to St Patrick's Day rather than on the 17th March given some of the feedback in the above statistics.**

**3.1 Financial**

**The 2015 programme would be delivered within the £140,000 as agreed by Members in February 2014.**

**4 Recommendations**

**4.1 Give guidance on the format of the event in 2015 and on which day the events should be staged on – 17th March or the nearest Sunday to this date.”**

During discussion, a number of Members indicated that the celebrations should revert to the traditional 17th March date in order to try and attract more spectators and encourage wider cross-community participation.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Ó Donnghaile,  
Seconded by Alderman Stalford and

Resolved – that the Committee notes the information which has been provided and agrees that the City's St. Patrick's Day event would revert back to 17th March from 2015 onwards.

**World Boxing Title Fight in Belfast**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 15th April, it had agreed, should the local boxer Carl Frampton secure a world title fight for himself in Belfast, that it might consider supporting the event. The Director pointed out that Mr. Frampton had secured a bout with the existing IBF world champion Kiko Martinez for 6th September at a venue to be confirmed in the City. He outlined the principal aspects of a report which indicated that the Council could seek to promote the event by making a facility available for the purposes of the weigh-in or a press conference. In addition, given that there had been an underspend of £7,500 identified within the budget which had been allocated to host the Giro d'Italia and the UK National Piping Championships, he outlined a

programme of community and youth-based events which could take place to mark the holding in Belfast of the bout.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and authorised the holding of a series of events, at a cost not to exceed £7,500, to mark the occasion of the world championship bout in Belfast.

### **Heating Oil Clubs**

The Committee was informed that the Council's Health and Environmental Services Committee, at its meeting on 4th June, had considered a report which outlined the aims and objectives of a pilot project which would provide practical support to community organisations in the setting up of Heating Oil Clubs. That Committee had agreed to contribute £6,000 towards the project, which would be overseen by the Council in conjunction with a range of bodies and agencies.

The Director reported that the principal aim of a Heating Oil Club was to establish collective groups across the City which would appoint a volunteer co-ordinator who would negotiate the most advantageous bulk price for the group with oil suppliers. Once a price per litre had been agreed, householders would make arrangements for delivery and payment directly with the supplier at the reduced rate. He outlined the principal aspects of the project and indicated that the total cost would be in the region of £23,000, of which a contribution of £8,000 had been requested from the Committee.

The Committee agreed to provide funding in the sum of £8,000 towards the pilot project and noted that an evaluation report would be submitted for its consideration in due course.

### **Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland - Consultation Response**

The Committee endorsed the contents of the response to the Department for Regional Developments Consultation in respect of the Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland, a copy of which was published on the Council's mod.gov website.

### **Community Development Grant Programme 2015 to 2017**

The Committee considered the undernoted report

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

- 1.1 The Belfast Statutory Transition Committee 9 April 2014 agreed the approach to BCC Community Development Grant Programme 2015/2017 and gave permission to progress to a competitive open call.**
- 1.2 Community Services are currently working with the Central Grants Unit to prepare for this open call across the new council area. The programme was launched at a high profile event at City Hall on 3 June 2014 with a formal information and**

awareness session. This is now being followed by a number of more localised information and awareness sessions, the provision of a 'hot desk' staffed by Community Services and a number of advice clinics. The open call for large grants is taking place June / July and that for small grants is scheduled for November.

- 1.3 Development Committee 20 August 2013 agreed a fund of £50,000 to assist in building the capacity of organisations to make the transition to the new grant programme. In addition funding was secured from Department of Social Development (DSD) under the Community Support Plan (CSP) to design and commission a training support programme for the sector as an opportunity to build capacity to deal with those challenges resulting from Local Government Reform and the open call for grants for 2015/17. This programme was delivered across the city during spring 2014.
- 1.4 The Committee 18 February 2014 agreed to accept a further report outlining options for the £50,000 additional programme of development support.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Community Development small grants are traditionally accessed by the significant number of small lower capacity community groups that operate across the city. Whilst the small grant programme for 2015/17 will not differ in any substantive way from the previous programme it is anticipated that there will be a number of challenges, particularly for lower capacity groups, in regard to processes and systems. The detail of the application process will be known in September.
- 2.2 Prior to the November open call for small grants the Central Grants Unit will be delivering information and awareness sessions across the new council area. This will cover both generic and grant specific information in relation to all council small grants opening at that time.
- 2.3 In addition to this approach it is proposed the £50,000 additional programme of development support be used to deliver a specific package to build the capacity of small organisations in accessing the community development small grants programme. To maximise the potential of this programme it is proposed it is delivered by those locally based community support organisations contracted by council under the current capacity building grant.

- 2.4 Currently 18 organisations are contracted by council under this grant the purpose of which is to support community groups to build their skills, knowledge, people, structures and systems at a neighbourhood level. It is proposed that the £50,000 would be allocated as uplift on current contract to those contracted groups interested in delivering the additional programme. This programme would be additional to that currently contracted as the grant programme is new and the timeframe for awareness raising and support is going to be tight in this first year of implementation.
- 2.5 Uplift awards will be made upon submission of a satisfactory submission from organisations in line with programme objectives.
- 2.6 Eligible organisations will be able, if appropriate, to submit a programme to cover those areas from Castlereagh and Lisburn moving into the new council area.

### **3 Resource Implications**

- 3.1 There are 18 areas within the current council boundary supported by the contracted support organisations. It is anticipated that the areas transferring to the new council area would bring an additional 4 areas to this figure i.e. 22 areas in total. The total budget available would allow a maximum award of £2,275 per area. It is hoped that cover of all 22 areas will be delivered by the programme

### **4 Recommendations**

To agree to the proposal as recommended in regard to the additional programme of development support.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

### **Loop River Play Centre - Licence Agreement Renewal**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 17th November, 2013, it had recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it authorise the variation to an existing lease and licence arrangement with the Scout Association for the use of premises at Courtney Hall for a 24 month period from 1st November, 2013, at a cost of £220 per week. It was reported that the Department's usage requirements for the Hall had varied slightly since the original agreement and it had been necessary to negotiate revised rents for the property as set out:

- £190 per week from 24th June, 2014, until the licence expiry or termination;

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- £330 per week during the four week summer scheme in July and August;
- £5.61 per hour for any extra hours required during the term of the licence.

The Committee agreed to the variation of the licence agreement, subject to the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Chairman