

All-Party Working Group on the City Centre

Friday, 3rd March, 2023

MEETING OF THE ALL-PARTY WORKING GROUP ON THE CITY CENTRE
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Long (Chairperson); and
Councillors Dorian and McCullough.

In attendance:
Ms. L. Toland, Head of Economic Development
Ms. K. Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mrs. D. Smith, Neighbourhood Service Integration
Mr. J. Uprichard, Business and Research Development
Manager ; and
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was received from Councillors O'Hara and Hutchinson. Councillor Long agreed to act as chairperson for the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 26th January, 2023 were agreed.

Presentation from BIDs on Purple Flag Accreditation

The chairperson welcomed Chris McCracken from the Linen Quarter BID to the meeting of the working group. Mr McCracken then gave a presentation to update members on the Purple Flag accreditation for Belfast.

Mr McCracken said that Purple Flag accreditation was a UK wide accreditation system for the effective management of the night-time economy, the broad definition to include food and drink, arts and culture, family markets. The timeframe included activity from 5pm to 5am. As part of the accreditation there was help with problem identification and included a problem-solving process.

He continued that there were many benefits to purple flag accreditation that included a partnership approach to improved co-ordination of the night time economy, it raised standards and broadened the appeal of the City Centre. Wider patronage and increased expenditure, along with lower crime and anti-social behaviour were also associated with Purple Flag accreditation along with a more successful mixed-use economy in the longer term.

He went on to outline the 5 core standards of purple flag; the policy envelope, wellbeing, movement, appeal and place. Mr McCracken informed members of the background to Belfast's involvement as said that the 3 BID's had combined to deliver the Purple Flag scheme that had been awarded to Belfast in early 2020. Covid had disrupted activity for the next two years, but the public, private and 3rd sector steering group had reformed to renew 6-month renewal process using structured analytical process and independent evaluation. They had created a strategic action plan to support the night time economy and although the previous findings were still relevant, he said they would be retested in new 2023 perception survey. He gave members an overview of the public perception 2019 baseline survey and highlighted a number of the key findings.

He went on to outline work the BIDS were undertaking to support the night time economy that included enhanced policing, BID Clean Teams, City Centre Gift Card, Belfast Restaurant Week, Marketing initiatives throughout the year, Funding for additional Christmas Lighting, Delivery partner for regeneration alongside support for wider initiatives such as Ask for Angela, Night-Time Volunteers.

Mr McCracken concluded his presentation with 10 actions that would support Belfast city centre nighttime economy and which of the 5 themes they supported.

Members of the working group stressed the importance of assessing the work of the various groups working to revitalize the city centre and ensuring that the work was streamlined to ensure the key groups were involved to maximise impact. They asked officers to look at the various groups, their key priorities and how this information could be structured and then bring this information back to a future meeting of the working group.

After further discussion the Members of the working group noted the contents of the presentation.

Chairperson