

Extract from minutes of –

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

12th AUGUST, 2009

“Planning and Transport Unit – Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

‘Relevant Background Information

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Belfast Masterplan

In the period since the formulation of the Masterplan in 2003/04 there has been considerable change to the economic, social and environmental context for the development of Belfast and the wider region. In addition, the proposed Review of Public Administration and the transfer of responsibilities, including local land use planning and regeneration functions, have altered the administrative context.

The five years since adoption have also seen the development of a number of new strategies, including the City Centre Masterplans and the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks, which the Department for Social Development commissioned for each of the five Partnership Board areas. This changing context and the emerging strategies for areas of the City have highlighted the need for the Council to have a coherent and up to date vision for the future development of Belfast.

The review of the current Belfast Masterplan offers the opportunity to revisit the strategic vision for the City. This review and updated strategic position would facilitate continued Council engagement with strategies such as the proposed Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and assist in influencing regeneration/development initiatives planned for the City.

The current Departmental budgets include provision for the procurement of the Masterplan review. To initiate the project it is suggested that the Committee approves an allocation of £70,000 towards the review and associated stakeholder consultation.

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Resource Implications

Financial

The review of the Belfast Masterplan will exceed the limit on procurement by quotation and will be subject of a competitive tender process with a budget approval of £70,000 recommended. The current Departmental budgets include provisions for the procurement of the Masterplan Review.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

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Approve the proposed review of the Belfast Masterplan and the procurement of specialist support through a competitive tender process at a cost of up to £70,000

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Decision Tracking

**Results of the proposed procurement process for the Masterplan review to be reported back to committee.
Timeline September 2009 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay'**

During discussion in the matter, Members made the undernoted comments regarding the proposed review of the Belfast Masterplan referred to within the report:

- (i) it might not be appropriate to undertake the review given that the boundary changes which would come into effect following the Review of Public Administration had not yet been clarified and the economic downturn was continuing;
- (ii) even if it were considered appropriate for the review to proceed it might not be necessary to employ outside consultants given the internal expertise which existed within the Council; and
- (iii) no mention had been made within the review of cycling, which was a significant mode of transport within the City.

In reply, the Director indicated that it might be possible for the review to be undertaken at a cost less than the £70,000 set out in the report. She accepted that there was in-house expertise to undertake such a review but pointed out that it would be necessary to relieve these staff of their current duties in order to permit them to concentrate on such work and, given the existing workload within the Department it was not considered to be a feasible option. She indicated that the Masterplan, which had been first produced in 2004, had helped to shape the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan and had been due for review in 2007. In addition, the Council's own Arterial Routes and Renewing the Routes initiatives, which had been a considerable success, owed much to the original Belfast Masterplan. The Director advised the Committee that the proposed review would allow the Council to put forward its own proposals for the future development of the City and that she would seek to ensure that the review incorporated the cycle routes in the City.

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