

Extract from minutes of –

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

14th APRIL, 2010

“Belfast City Marathon

The Committee was reminded that the Belfast City Marathon had been arranged since 1982 by an organising committee involving the Council, Athletics Northern Ireland and other partners and sponsors. Since its inauguration, the Council had co-sponsored the event, with £40,000 having been allocated for the 2010 event. The event traditionally takes place on the first bank holiday Monday in May and in recent years overall participation in the event had risen dramatically. However, the Chairman of Belfast City Marathon Limited had written to the Council seeking support to change the Marathon event day to a Sunday.

The Head of City Events and Venues reported that when the marathon had first commenced in the early 1980s, the May Bank Holiday Monday had been a quiet day for the City. However, that was no longer the case and Bank Holiday Mondays were now, for the most part, treated as normal working days. By the nature of the range of events delivered by Belfast City Marathon Limited on that day, there was considerable disruption to transport, traffic and commerce in the City. There were a number of reasons supporting a switch to a Sunday which included:

- (i) all major international marathons were held on a Sunday. International marathon participants were accustomed to and preferred to visit and participate in major City marathons over a weekend, which enabled them to return home without sacrificing their Monday's at work;
- (ii) the costs of policing, as highlighted by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, would be reduced greatly should the event switch to a Sunday. That had become a major issue affecting the level of support and resources which the Police could make available to the event; and
- (iii) there would be much less disruption to the City on a Sunday when the bulk of the event would be completed by 1.00 p.m. Retailers were not open before 1.00 p.m. on a Sunday and most other businesses were closed.

In addition, Belfast City Marathon Limited had received letters of support for the proposed change to a Sunday from Translink, the Department for Regional Development Roads Division, Belfast Centre Management and the event's key organising partner, Athletics Northern Ireland.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to support Belfast City Marathon Limited's proposal to switch the Belfast Marathon event to take place on a Sunday from May, 2011 onwards.”