



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	PLACE
Date:	13 October 2010
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen Director of Development ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay Head of Economic Initiatives ext 3459

Relevant Background Information

The Council agreed to support the creation of PLACE, the Northern Ireland Centre for Architecture and the Built Environment, in November 2003. Council further agreed in November 2007 to support PLACE for up to three years from March 2008, subject to a business plan which was received.

Council provide PLACE, at no cost, with premises at 40 Fountain Street, Belfast. The premises form part of the area leased to Council for the activities of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau and Belfast Welcome Centre. The premises have limited shop frontage and would be difficult to let. Council also cover the maintenance costs for the space.

PLACE is a working partnership between Belfast City Council and the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA). The RSUA currently pay the management costs of PLACE, including staff and utilities and are responsible for implementation of the business plan. PLACE are also supported by contributions from the Arts Council, Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), Department for Environment (DOE), Strategic Investment Board (SIB) and Department for Social Development (DSD).

Key Issues

After being established in 2004 by Belfast City Council and RSUA, PLACE is now forming a stand alone legal entity to ensure it is well equipped to continue to deliver on its activities. PLACE is preparing to become a company limited by guarantee with charitable status and independence from RSUA.

Council are committed to support PLACE until March 2011. PLACE now wish to update members on their restructure plans and their proposals for the involvement of Belfast City Council in the future of PLACE.

Current PLACE activities include:

PLACE working with the Department for Social Development, Belfast Regeneration Office to provide a community led development brief for the former Andersonstown Police Barracks.

The PLACE Director Michael Hegarty has been commissioned by Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to facilitate community participation in the redevelopment of the Village, Donegall Road, Belfast.

PLACE works in partnership with Belfast City Centre Management, DSD, Cathedral Quarter Steering Group (CQSG) and the developers of Royal Exchange to attempt to secure community participation in the proposed development Royal Exchange.

PLACE is part of the DSD Glen Road Reference Group (Glen 10).

PLACE are working with DOE Planning and Policy Unit, DCAL and the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) on policy initiatives and conferences.

Belfast architectural tours in the city centre, lecture series and exhibitions are all facilitated by PLACE.

PLACE currently occupy premises leased to Belfast City Council. Members will be aware that the possible relocation of BVCB and the Belfast Welcome Centre is under economic appraisal. PLACE have indicated that they would like to continue to co-locate with BVCB if possible. Council are currently negotiating an extension to the lease on the premises with the landlord. The current lease terminated on 31 July 2010 and Council applied to the Lands Tribunal for an extension to allow for the completion of an economic appraisal on the possible relocation of BVCB and the Welcome Centre.

Resource Implications

PLACE maintenance costs included in Development Department Plans of approximately £6,000 per annum.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee receive a presentation from the Director of PLACE on PLACE restructuring to highlight the rational of the change and the continued commitments to working in Belfast and with the council.

Decision Tracking

Further to agreement a date for the presentation from PLACE to be notified to Members.

Timeframe: October 2010

Reporting Officer: Tim Husbands

Key Abbreviations

BVCB:	Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
RSUA:	Royal Society of Ulster Architects
DSD BRO:	Department for Social Development, Belfast Regeneration Office
SIB:	Strategic Investment Board
NIHE:	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
CQSG:	Cathedral Quarter Steering Group
DOE:	Department for Environment
DCAL:	Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure
MAG:	Ministerial Advisory Group