

Extract from minutes of –

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

20th NOVEMBER, 2012

“St. Patrick’s Day 2013

(Mr. G. Copeland, Events Manager, attended in connection with this item and Councillor Ó Donnghaile left the room whilst it was under discussion.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

‘1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 In January 2012 Council agreed to the annual programme of civic events to be delivered during the 2012/13 financial year. This included the staging of the 2013 St Patrick’s event on Sunday 17th March. In August 2012 Members also agreed that Officers would look into the feasibility of the Council incorporating and promoting a specifically alcohol-free event within its St Patrick’s Day celebrations. In addition at October’s meeting Members asked that Officers look at additional ideas and concepts for the 2013 event and beyond.**
- 1.2 The Council has developed a St Patrick’s Day event over the last seven years (up to 2012) and this event has, since its inception, two elements – a carnival style parade from City Hall to Custom House Square, followed by a live concert at Department of Social Development’s (DSD) purpose built performance space. In 2012 it is estimated that 15,000 people attended the event with participants in both the parade and concert coming from various cultural groups across the city. The proposed programme would see the event move from one day of activity to a possible three day festival.**
- 1.3 It should be noted that the elements of the proposed 2013 event will be primarily geared towards a family audience (with a range of events were no alcohol will be permitted) and would also contain significant elements to encourage out-of-state visitors to come to the city.**

2 Key Issues

2.1 Parade Tender

The City Events Unit has consulted with the Council’s Procurement in regard to up-scaling the parade tender. Feedback suggests that the process would leave little time for the appointment and subsequent engagement of an

appropriately qualified contractor – the initial tender could not go out until after Council meets at the start of December 2012 and the earliest possible appointment date would be towards the middle of February 2013 - leaving possibly less than four weeks to develop themes and workshops for the event.

Therefore, Officers are proposing that a quotation is used for 2013 and a tender is then issued for the period 2014 to 2017 (subject to review and renewal).

2.2 Revised Events Programme

On the direction of the Committee decision in October 2012, and in reference to 2.1 above, Officers have developed a larger event programme for 2013. It would be proposed that the festival would include:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Details</u>
Find your Belfast Roots - week leading up to the 2013 St Patrick's Day	The Council would work with PRONI in promoting this element of the programme.
St Patrick Themed Tours of the City and St Patrick's historical tours of city's cemeteries	Council officers would explore existing city and cemetery tours to adapt the tours during St Patrick's Festival.
Live at the Big Screen, Saturday 16th to Monday 17th March	This proposed element would run over three nights and involve the screening of classic family films with a Belfast, Ulster or Irish theme e.g. St Patrick – The Legend; Closing the Ring; etc.

**St Patrick's Day
Parade, Sunday 17th
March**

Events parade from City Hall to Custom House Square. The appointed contractor would manage content and liaise with community groups, from across the city, in regard to participation. Expected participant numbers circa 500.

**St Patrick's Day
Concert, Sunday
17th March**

Three hour live music concert at Custom House Square. This will entail a broad range of entertainers and will culminate with a 'Pop' act.

**St Patrick – Myth and
Legend and The
History of St
Patrick's Day**

This would be a series of free to access talks, possibly at City Hall. An option to work with the Ulster Hall to develop heritage exhibition showcasing the history of day and past celebrations.

**Patrick and the
Bells – musical
showcase on 15th
March 2013**

Performance of the musical depicting St Patrick's life story. This event would be held in City Hall, would be free to access but would be pre-ticketed.

**St Patrick's Day
Ceili and Dance,
Sunday 17th March
Ulster Hall**

This concept would be delivered by the Ulster Hall and involve an afternoon and evening event. The event would be free to access, but would be pre-ticketed. Possible linkage with community centres to offer dancing classes a few weeks prior to the event.

**BBC Radio Ulster
and the Ulster
Orchestra's
St Patrick's Day
Concert, Belfast
Waterfront, Sunday
17th March**

This event would see the Ulster Orchestra join up with an international artist in a celebration of music tied to the St Patrick's Day theme.

**Big Screen
St Patrick's Day
(or weekend) Sports
Coverage and
Sports Activity Day
at Ozone and/or
Leisure Centres**

Council Officers would explore the broadcasting rights issues in regard to the traditional soccer, rugby and Gaelic finals staged around this date. If permissions can be facilitated it would be suggested that an event, with input from partners, would also promote a "healthy lifestyle" message alongside the screening of the games. Youth Blitz offer coaching and games competitions– GAA, Rugby, Soccer on Saturday 16th March.

**St Patrick's Weekend
Market and Food Fair
at St Georges Market**

The festival programme would promote the St Patrick's Day theme Sunday Market plus all day entertainment with dancers and musicians.

St Patrick's Day Services

The programme would highlight the various religious services

Schools Competition

Council Officers would explore option of links with local schools to run St Patrick themed colour competitions etc, showcase best 50 entries in City Hall during St Patricks Festival.

Street Dressing and City Hall Lighting

It is proposed, if budgets permit, that elements of the city centre branding would carry the "brand" created for the St Patrick's Day festival. (This would be accompanied by the request to utilise the new colour lighting system and turn the City Hall green on the weekend of St Patrick's Day.)

Belfast Féile's Féile an Earraigh (Spring Festival 11th – 17th March 2013)

Council Officers would propose to cross promote and highlight this significant festival in the city's calendar as it would coincide with the proposed festival dates.

The Gathering

As per agreement from October's Committee, Belfast's St Patrick's Day activities have been registered as part of the 2013 Tourism Ireland initiative.

2.19 Meeting with Sober St Patrick's Day Initiative

On the 4th October the Council's City Events Manager met with the organiser, and instigator, of the New York City's Sober St Patrick's Day initiative, Mr Bill Reilly. Mr Reilly highlighted the raison d'être of the event. He also indicated how the event was delivered in 2012 and plans for the 2013 project. Part of these plans is to link to other key global St Patrick's Day events, Dublin, London, Belfast, etc. next year.

The Council's City Events Manager highlighted that the city already had a "sober" St Patrick's Day event and the fact that all future plans, subject to Council yearly approvals, would operate in a similar manner. However, it was agreed that the "brand message" of Sober St Patrick's Day could be integrated if agreed by full Council. It is also recommended that as part of St Patrick's Day event that pressure groups and organisations involved in addiction and recovery initiatives are requested to take part in the St Patrick's Day parade.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Financial

It is estimated that the additional initiatives could be delivered, inclusive of street dressing, at an additional £70,000 on top of the current £140,000 which covers the annual St Patrick's parade (£30,000) and concert (£110,000). Total cost of the 2013 would be £210,000. However, to upscale the parade element in future years it would be recommended that a delivery of £250,000 is earmarked. Members are asked to note that the additional finances for 2013 are not within the current Department budgets. Therefore, it will require a realignment of current 2012/13 monies to accommodate.

In addition, any future increase 2013/14 and onwards, will need to be built into future budget planning and will require: an increase in future Department budgets and/or a curtailing of current work undertaken by the Council.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Members are asked to approve the following recommendations:

- the issuing of a tender for the St Patrick's Day carnival parade from 2014 to 2017.
- the revised outline programme for 2013, with this format used in subsequent years. The content would contain: film screenings; concerts; a parade; sports related activities; tours; talks; food fair and market; links to Belfast's churches and possible joint initiatives with the Public Records Office, National Museums NI and Libraries NI.
- linking and cross promotion of Belfast Féile's - Féile an Earraigh (Spring Festival).

- **that a “Sober St Patrick’s Day” brand message is integrated into future Council initiatives connected to this event. Along with ‘healthy living’ elements via partners in BCC’s Environmental Health Department, Park and Leisure Department and Public Health Agency**
- **linking Belfast’s St Patrick’s Day activities to Tourism Ireland’s global campaign, “The Gathering”.**
- **increasing the current draft budget for 2013 to £210,000 and for future years to £250,000.’**

A prolonged discussion ensued in respect of the proposals to authorise additional expenditure to enhance the scope of the St. Patrick’s Day celebrations in 2013 and in future years. It was suggested that it would be prudent for the Committee to agree only to enhance, on a trial basis, the programme in 2013 and that any decision regarding the extent of the Council’s programme in future years could be considered thereafter. Further Members pointed out that, in view of the economic climate and its associated impact on the Council’s budgets, it would be inappropriate to increase significantly the expenditure on the St. Patrick’s Day programme.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Kelly,
Seconded by Councillor Hendron,

That the Committee agrees to adopt the recommendations contained within the report and authorises the additional expenditure as outlined for the enhancement of the Council’s St. Patrick’s Day programme in 2013 only and notes that any further decision on the extent of the programme in future years would be made after the submission and consideration of a report which would assess the impact of the revised programme in 2013.

On a vote by show of hands nine Members voted for the proposal and seven against and it was declared carried.”