

Extract from minutes of –

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

9th JANUARY, 2008

**“Brighter Belfast Initiative –
Proposed Projects 2008/2009”**

The Committee was reminded that the Brighter Belfast Initiative was the Council's campaign to create a cleaner and more attractive City and that it had since 2003 been included as a key priority within the Corporate Plan. The Director of Health and Environmental Services reviewed the arrangements for the funding of the Initiative and indicated that, in light of information which had been received from the Director of Corporate Services, it would appear likely that approximately £350,000 could be made available to undertake projects in 2008/2009. He explained that the Inter-departmental Officers' Steering Group had been requested to identify projects which might benefit from funding through the Brighter Belfast Initiative and to indicate both the ideal level of funding required for each scheme, together with the minimum amount necessary to ensure its viability. He reported that the Brighter Belfast All-Party Working Group, at its meeting on 11th December, had reviewed five projects and had recommended that they be approved by the Health and Environmental Services Committee, with funding being made available at the minimum estimated levels required for implementation. Accordingly, the Committee considered the undernoted schemes:

- **Making Belfast Bloom**

The Members were advised that the purpose of the Belfast in Bloom Project was to enhance the attractiveness of the City Centre and main arterial routes through the provision of various types of floral displays. During 2007, in excess of 1,000 displays had been located throughout the City and this had led to Belfast being invited to participate in 2008 for the first time in the prestigious Britain in Bloom competition. The minimum level of funding which would be required to undertake the scheme would be £50,000 and this would be used to deliver an extensive marketing programme in order to promote both the Belfast in Bloom campaign and the City's participation in the Britain in Bloom competition. It would be used also to provide additional displays in key locations throughout the City and to encourage a greater participation from both the commercial and community sectors.

- **The Community in the City: A Public Art Project**

This project sought to consolidate the role of public art in the wider regeneration of the City through the creation of pieces of art to be sited within the City Centre. The scheme, which would be facilitated by a newly-appointed Artist in Residence, would enable communities to enhance their skills and to engage in the development of the City in a direct, inclusive and sustainable way. The project would reach a wide-ranging audience and would have a significant impact in terms of skills development and visibility of public art. It was pointed out that the minimum level of funding required to complete the project would be £50,000 and that the Development Department's Culture and Arts Unit intended to raise up to £25,000 in sponsorship from private and business sector organisations.

- **Evening Economy**

The Committee was advised that the purpose of the Evening Economy project was to enhance the attractiveness of the City Centre and to promote Belfast as a vibrant, dynamic European City by encouraging a higher number of visitors and associated spending after 5.00 p.m. It was pointed out that the Evening Economy project had significant economic, social, tourism and cultural benefits for the City and that research had indicated that £31 million was being spent annually as a result. The opening, in March, of the Victoria Square Development, together with plans to extend late night shopping hours, would provide an opportunity to continue to develop and enhance the evening economy initiative. There was a need also to develop projects with the City's infrastructure sector, including transport and parking, in order to promote access to the City in the evening time. Accordingly, a minimum amount of £90,000 had been requested from the Brighter Belfast Initiative in order to further the Evening Economy project.

- **Greencare III**

It was reported that the Greencare III programme, which was a collaborative partnership between the Council, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Groundwork Northern Ireland, sought to deliver environmental improvement projects in selected deprived communities throughout the City. Areas were prioritised according to need and participating communities were selected by

the Greencare Committee on the basis of cultural make-up and broad geographical areas. The scheme increased social and community cohesion and improved the quality of life of people in disadvantaged areas through an inclusive and participative process of community environmental regeneration. £150,000 had been sought from the Brighter Belfast Initiative to fund the project in 2008/2009 and this funding would be utilised for programme costs and capital projects. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive would contribute also £75,000 of capital funding, as it had in 2007/2008.

- **Pride of Place Competition 2008**

The Committee was advised that the Pride of Place Competition, which was held throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, sought to recognise and celebrate the vital contributions made to society by community groups. The Competition provided groups with an opportunity to showcase initiatives which would have a long-lasting and positive impact upon their communities. It was reported that the awards ceremony was now a high-profile and prestigious event and that community groups gained encouragement by being selected for and in attending the event. Accordingly, the Brighter Belfast All-Party Working Group had recommended that funding of £7,000 be made available for participation in the Pride of Place Competition on the basis that travel time to and from the awards ceremony and attendance at other events thereat justified a two-night stay. Otherwise, the Group had agreed that funding in the sum of £6,000 be made available.

After discussion, the Committee agreed the foregoing projects and recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the associated levels of funding from within the Waste Disposal Fund.”

