

Extract from minutes of -

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

18th SEPTEMBER, 2009

**“Peace III Priority 2.1
Creating Shared Public Spaces**

The Committee considered the undernoted report in relation to the funding of projects under Priority 2.1 of the Peace III Programme:

‘Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has been participating in the Peace III programme through the Good Relations and EU unit officers. The Good Relations unit has managed the process to date to develop and secured funding under priority 1.1 of the Peace III programme to provide a multi annual programme of Peace initiatives 2008-2011.

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update regarding priority 2.1 of the Peace III programme and seek agreement with regard to current opportunities.

The framework of the Peace III programme 2007-2013 is represented as follows;

Members may be aware that in August 2007, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) opened a call under the Creating Shared Public Spaces Call of the Peace III programme. From the period August to October 2007 the European unit coordinated a process of identifying and submitting eight council proposals under this call. Following feedback from SEUPB the council later refined this submission and in December 2007 agreed to the re-submission of the North Foreshore Bridge proposal as well as the Skatepark project.

Members will be aware that since this time, the Skatepark project consequently succeeded in securing £375,000 and is underway and the North Foreshore Bridge project was rejected.

Current Situation

In line with the Good Relations Plan and the objective of “Building Shared City Spaces” in the current Peace Plan, the 2.1 capital bids present real opportunities to realise this ambition. The Good Relations partnership recognises that high quality shared public spaces will be an economic benefit to the city, in terms of reputation, city attractiveness, reducing the costs of duplication and increased sharing across a range of facilities.

It is important the economic and social value of sharing is more explicitly promoted and “designed in” when planning, delivering and managing shared spaces in the city. The SEUPB will rigorously test the “shared” aspect of any bid. Based on initial discussions and relevant research, the Good Relations Partnership recently recommended to Council that a working definition for shared space is:

- *Welcoming* – where people feel secure to take part in unfamiliar interactions, and increase an overall sense of shared experience and community.
- *Accessible* – well-connected in terms of transport and pedestrian links within a network of similar spaces across the city and managed to promote maximum participation by all communities.
- *Good quality* – attractive, high quality unique services and well-designed buildings and spaces.
- *Safe* – for all persons and groups, trusted by both locals and visitors.

Importantly, it must be understood that “shared space” is not neutral; it is a place where a diversity of identity, culture and heritage can be expressed and enjoyed in an environment of safety, tolerance and acceptance.

The Peace III network measure 2.1 has re-opened for a second call and will close on 13 November 2009. In order to identify Council Priorities for submitting proposals, the European unit has looked at the councils current "Place Shaping Projects" priorities and assessed these against the measure 2.1 criteria.

Priority 2.1 Creating Shared Public Spaces

Under 2.1 second call, the SEUPB is seeking strategic physical project submissions to meet the following criteria;

- To act as a catalyst for transforming the local community
- Be iconic with a capacity to provide a lasting legacy to the Peace III programme
- Incorporate high design and environmental quality
- Demonstrate long term sustainability
- Range in size from 1.5M to 10M euros

Under this measure the SEUPB wants to support 6-8 very large strategic and iconic projects across the eligible Peace III programme area funded at between 2-10 million euros each. The idea of this measure is to produce iconic structures that can be easily recognised as a Peace III project long after the programme ends. For a project to be successful, it must achieve 70 or above in relation to the following listed criteria.

- Shared space potential
- Catalyst for transforming
- Capacity to be iconic
- Sustainable development
- Capacity to implement
- Financial competence (fund yourself up front and claim in arrears)

The weak areas for most projects submitted to date have been the capacity to be iconic and the catalyst for transforming.

SEUPB particularly wants to see physical projects that address some of the following;

- Segregated areas
- Sectarian graffiti, flags and emblems
- Peace walls and demarcation lines
- Sectarianism
- Under used and unwelcoming areas
- Creation of shared public spaces

Any bid to SEUPB would need to significantly contribute to the desired outcomes that they outline in the Peace III Programme, for example: the removal of interface barriers; a reduction in violence and tension; and increased levels of trust and tolerance.

In initial draft of a “shared space” plan has been prepared for discussion with the Crusaders and Newington Football Clubs, outlining possible actions and a performance management framework. Similar “shared space” plans would need to be prepared for each of the Council bids to underpin the capital expenditure, demonstrating the sustainability and integrity of the “sharing”.

As a starter, it is suggested that a series of actions, with associated targets, are considered under each of the following headings, as part of each of the action plans:

<p><u>Welcoming</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Branding and symbols b. Promotion and publicity c. Management and governance d. Volunteering e. Community engagement <p><u>Good quality</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> j. physical design k. programming events l. sharing high-quality resources m. Recruitment, development and progression of locally recruited volunteers and staff n. promoting unique cultural heritage 	<p><u>Safe</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Physical design g. Policing/Stewarding h. Codes of conduct and enforcement i. Managing critical incidents <p><u>Accessible</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o. Location p. well-served by public transport q. well-served by pedestrian and cycle links r. Affordability s. Involving under-represented groups e.g. disabled groups t. Youth programming u. monitoring participation of all groups and targeted campaigns/programmes
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Other actions may emerge and will be tailored to the particular objectives of each bid.

Additionally, many of these actions will also deliver outcomes for the Council in terms of other corporate strategic objectives, such as place-shaping, health and well-being, community safety and economic regeneration.

It is hoped that this multi-layered approach to delivering shared space, will amply demonstrate both the iconic nature of the bids to SEUPB but also the multiple transformative benefits for neighbouring communities and the city itself.

Having considered the Place Shaping projects, a number have been identified as possible contenders for this Peace III 2.1 funding. A shortlist of projects was developed by an officer working group led by the Director of Development. These may be summarised as follows;

- North Foreshore (N)
- Seaview Allotments (N)
- Floral Hall (N)
- Maysfield (WTC) (CC)
- CS. Lewis Project (E)
- Gasworks Northern Fringe (S)
- Gasworks Bridge (S)
- Cultural Quarter (SS/N)
- (Cathedral & Gaol)
- Public Service- Service Girdwood (N)
- Convention Centre (CC)
- Sports Village (N)
- Mary Peters Track (S)
- Green Corridor (NW)
- Gaeltacht Quarter (W)
- HMS Caroline (CC)

Having considered the list and examined it in the context of the Peace III criteria the projects outlined below led by Belfast City Council are deemed relevant for submission;

Projects that were considered potentially viable under Peace III 2.1 call are the following;

- (i) Cultural Corridor (CC/N) - linking the Cathedral Quarter to Carlisle Circus, Crumlin Road Jail to Shankill and Conway Mills (environmental, cultural, tourist and physical developments as well as creating shared space and increased community mobility)
- (ii) Public service centre at Girdwood (N) - this project will only be viable if key partners are willing and commit within the required November timescale
- (iii) Peaceful Trail (N&W) - Peace Trail linking North and West Belfast green areas including the Seaview allotments
- (iv) HMS Caroline (CC) - to add to the Belfast maritime heritage
- (v) Gasworks Bridge (E/CC) - linking the Gasworks to the Ormeau Park

Members are required to consider the five project options and make recommendations on which proposals should be further developed bearing in the mind the closing date of 13 November for full applications to the SEUPB. Members should note that projects must be fully costed, accompanied with a business case and ready for delivery with no planning or implementation barriers or implications.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members consider and select project proposals for submission under the anticipated Peace III 2.1 call for submission by 13 November 2009.'

In response to a number of questions, the Director of Improvement stated that any projects which were approved under the Peace III Programme would receive 100% funding. He stated that the five projects outlined were those which had been deemed to be most likely to be viable under the programme and meet the Peace III criteria.

The Committee agreed that projects (i) the Cultural Corridor and (ii) the Public Service Centre at Girdwood be further developed and submitted for funding under Priority 2.1 of Peace III. The Committee agreed also that further investigation be undertaken in relation to project (iv) the HMS Caroline and a report thereon be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on the likelihood of it being successful in receiving funding under the Peace III Scheme."