

## **Appendix1 - Information for update of stimulus package**

### **POVERTY AND INEQUALITIES FRAMEWORK**

Belfast has the highest level of deprivation in Northern Ireland – and this translates into lower life expectancy and higher levels of illness as well as uneven access to services.

Belfast City Council cannot eradicate poverty but we can make our services more accessible, advocate effectively and use our resources so that we support people where they are now, facing the long-term effects of the recession. The Council is developing a poverty and implementation framework which will impact across the city, including the “hidden” pockets of poverty which exist at sub-ward level. Under this Framework we will:

1. Ensure that our services are more accessible;
2. Target our resources more effectively;
3. Work in partnership with other lead government departments to deliver on-the-ground projects that will support citizens; and
4. Advocate for the people of Belfast who are experiencing poverty and inequalities.

In addition to the measures relating to procurement and social clauses, improving skills and reducing worklessness set out in other parts of the stimulus package, key actions will include:

#### **1. Support for social economy projects**

- Improve procurement practices to ensure social economy enterprises have an opportunity to bid for contracts
- Undertake pre-enterprise social economy support in order to increase the number of social economy businesses

#### **2. Community tourism and outreach**

- Work with communities along key tourism routes and help them set up community tourism enterprises.
- Expand development and outreach programme so that people in poverty can access cultural opportunities.

#### **3. Support and fund advice provision infrastructure in Belfast**

- Maximise the uptake of rate relief in partnership with Land and Property Services.
- Invest £800,000 a year in funding to ensure provision of generalist advice and which draw at least £8 million in unclaimed benefits.
- Build capacity of the advice providers (on annual basis).

#### **4. Reduce fuel poverty**

- Investigate the possibility of piloting a warm zones approach in two socially deprived areas of the city which would aim to demonstrate a proof of concept to reducing fuel poverty and carbon emissions.
- Ensure that the most vulnerable people in Belfast participate in the fuel stamp initiative this scheme which has successfully helped residents save over £300,000 worth of oil stamps since its launch,

- Explore funding opportunities for delivery of new energy efficiency powers.

## **5. Improve access to parks and leisure centres**

- Map out parks and playgrounds to ensure that all children have access to them.
- Support people in the most deprived areas to gain access to leisure centres free of charge – in partnership with the Public Health Agency

## **6. Reducing Health Inequalities**

- The Council is a lead partner in a new a cross-sector partnership – the Belfast Strategic Partnership, set up to address health and life inequalities across Belfast. The partnership is finalising its five-year health inequalities strategy, entitled 'Framework for Action on Addressing Life Inequalities' which will ensure that all partners are focusing on and aligning resources to some of the main aspects of health inequality in the city, including mental health and emotional wellbeing; addressing life long learning related issues; alcohol and drug related health issues and early years and early interventions.

## **SOCIAL CLAUSES**

The Council will:

- Positively welcome and advocate for the introduction of the new legislation being brought forward by the DoE which will introduce greater flexibility and relax the restrictions on matters which Councils can consider (including social clauses) in exercising their procurement functions.
- Work with DEL and other key stakeholders (including the NIHE, Construction Industry Forum, Central Procurement Directorate, Strategic Investment Board, business representative organisations, community organisations and training organisations) to establish a **City-Wide social Clause Delivery Forum** which will actively seek to mainstream social clauses in key public contracts.
- Actively work with key public and private sector bodies to negotiate social clauses as a condition of recent and future investment decisions and partnership projects. This work builds on the Council's approach to the Titanic Belfast project where Council worked with central government to ensure that social clauses were part of the contract in order to provide opportunities for unemployed young people and apprentices during construction.
- Implement a range of employment and pre-employment support programmes which will provide local people with the necessary skills to access emerging employment opportunities linked to key developments across the city.

## **SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

It is proposed that the revised investment package incorporates the following initiatives and programmes which seek to support employment and skills development across the city.

### **CURRENT INITIATIVES UNDERWAY**

- i. **City-Wide Employability and Skills Strategy and Action Plan** – The Council is working with the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) to get agreement on the development and delivery of a city-wide employability and skills strategy and action plan. In conjunction with other partners, the plan will focus on a number of activities including:
  - Development of and agreement on an overarching strategic framework covering the breadth of the worklessness and skills agenda in Belfast, which informs and shapes partner organisations' business plans
  - Mobilisation of mainstream and discretionary funds to deliver the agreed strategy
  - Addressing gaps in provision and barriers to delivery that hinder progress in achieving the agreed priorities
  - Development and management of appropriate data management systems which support enhanced labour market intelligence and help target interventions to ensure delivery of agreed targets
  - Monitoring performance against targets
  - Sharing best practice from partner organisations and wider to enhance the quality of provision.
- ii. **Targeted employability support initiatives**
  - **HARTE (Hospitality and Retail Training for Employment) Programme - £35k Council investment** this year towards a **£460k** initiative which seeks to get **200 long-term unemployed people into employment** in the hospitality and service sector.
  - **Stepping Stone Initiative - £8k Council investment** this year towards a **£430k programme** which focuses on building employability skills of unemployed individuals.
  - **Tools for Life - £20k Council investment** this year towards a **£450k** employment programme concentrating on young people not in education, employment or training. This programme aims to increase the employability of 135 young people
  - **Jobs on the Move – £25k Council investment** this year towards a **£780K** engagement and outreach work programme which seeks to provide pre-employment support for around 1200 people
  - **Learn 2 Earn - £5k Council investment** this year towards a **£220k support programme** focusing on the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism industry.
- ii. **Young Persons Employment Initiative** – the Council recently ran, in partnership with DEL and North City Training -Bryson Charitable Group's Training and Employment Unit, a pilot programme which provided young people (aged 18-24), who had been unemployed for more than one year, temporary waged work

experience over a 26 week period. **36 placement opportunities** were facilitated of which 5 were graduate opportunities. Following the success of this pilot, the Council agreed to engage with North City Training on a **further 3 year programme, offering 10 placement opportunities each year.**

- iii. **Community Outreach Programme** - This Programme operates an unpaid work experience placement scheme for, on average each year, **200 students** from schools and further education / university establishments and **30 unpaid disability** work experience placements from a range of disability organisations.

The Council has also engaged, on a pilot basis, with the Probation Board for NI (PBNI) and Youth Justice Agency (YJA) to provide work experience placements for individuals required to carry out community service orders.

- iv. **Public Employment Partnership (PEP)** - The Council, along with Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, recently participated in a pre-employment training programme for the long term unemployed organised by North Belfast Partnership Board. The aim of the programme was to assist the long term unemployed gain the necessary skills and experience to support them in gaining employment. As part of the programme the Council facilitated site visits, work experience placements and mock interview sessions. The Council facilitated **19 placements across various disciplines e.g. refuse collection, street sweeping, gardening, cleaning, community services and administration.** Of the 19 participants, 7 (37%) have gained employment. While this application was unsuccessful, the model could be adopted by Council and other public sector partners should alternative resources be available.
- v. **Industrial Placements** – In the last 4 years the Council has funded 83 paid industrial placements to support young people gain vital experience as part of their university course.

## **NEW PATHWAYS TO SUPPORT EMPLOYABILITY & SKILLS ACROSS THE CITY**

The Council will also actively explore a number of **new pathways** to supporting the development of employability and skills across the city. These might include:

- **City-wide Bursary Schemes** - the development of a **bursary scheme** to enable the unemployed and those on low incomes get back to work, progress in work or go on to further education and training. The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) has recently commissioned a **feasibility study** about making a bursary scheme available across the city. It is proposed that the Council should work with DEL to ensure that any emerging recommendations represent the **maximum benefit to people across the whole city.**

In order to ensure meaningful engagement and underline commitment to this outcome, it is proposed that **a sum should be committed** through the Council's estimating process to ensure effective delivery of the recommendations with a view to seeking match funding from DEL and the private sector. **A sum of up to £100,000** is potentially available through re-alignment of the Council's thematic budgets.

There are also a number of **internship programmes** that may be considered. These include :

- **the Graduate Acceleration Programme** –Queen’s University and University of Ulster, along with Business in the Community have developed a programme centred on providing graduates with meaningful work experience and a valuable qualification. This programme is supported by DEL and is delivered through Steps to Work. There is an opportunity for the Council to support this work. Placement providers may be required to pay up to £1,500 towards graduate grant.
- **UUJ’s Professional Experience Programme** - a 26 week internship with the University of Ulster’s part-time online Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice. Financial contribution from employer of £2,500 per graduate, with University contribution of £5,000.
- **Belfast Metropolitan College’s Career Academy**- national programme designed to help young people raise their aspirations and prepare them for a career in business through a 6 week paid internship (summer months) which provides expertise insight and mentoring support.
- **Belfast Metropolitan College’s Career advocates programme** - separate from Career Academy – identify various Council staff to provide 1-2-1 mentoring and information to students on specific areas of expertise.

Further assessment of these options will be required, in line with council capacity and financial commitments. Members may wish to focus on those programmes which help the placements gain formal accreditation as well as the experience. **Specific participation targets will be established for any internship programmes put in place by the Council.**

## SUPPORTING LOCAL PROCUREMENT

In recognition of the Council's significant spending power and potential impact on local suppliers, Members have asked that consideration be given to identifying what practical steps could be undertaken to increase awareness among small businesses of the Council's tendering processes and to improve the overall capacity of small businesses to compete for public tendering opportunities. In 2010/2011 the Council spent **£88.9m** in procuring goods and services, of which **£60.4m (68%)** was delivered through local (Belfast based) suppliers.

### EXISTING SUPPORT

The Council already supports a number of specific initiatives targeted at local businesses including:

#### 1. Procurement support initiatives:-

- Input into "**meet the buyer**" events – providing overview of Council tendering processes and raising awareness among local suppliers
  - Organisation of **tendering workshops** (in response to requests from local organisations) at a range of venues across the city.
  - Local **suppliers database** created, allowing potential suppliers to provide their details for use by those engaged in purchasing activities across the organisation
  - Encouragement to **introduce new suppliers for quotations** – as a way of increasing the number of new businesses working with the Council.
  - **Advertising emerging contracts** - All procurement opportunities (both tenders and quotations) are advertised on the Council's website
  - **RSS Email alerts** – the Council has put in place a notification service where businesses on the Council's supplier database can receive automatic notifications of contract opportunities including those below the official tender threshold (£30,000).
2. The **Smarter Procurement programme** – a programme run twice a year for 10 local businesses designed to help small businesses and social enterprises identify and take advantage of new sales opportunities in the public and private sectors. It aims to provide participants with the knowledge to identify procurement opportunities and develop the skills required to construct bids to enable them to tender for contracts more effectively.
  3. The **Construction Sales Growth Programme** - which has been designed to support 50 local sub-contractors and enable them to identify and exploit supply chain opportunities through one-to one mentoring support, workshops and partnership opportunities. **This programme has a target of generating £1million of new business for participating companies.**
  4. **eSourcing NI** – the Council currently uses this web based portal to further publicise tenders. This is an electronic tendering system which enables suppliers to complete and tender on-line thereby reducing their costs. It provides access to central and local government opportunities and it increases accessibility for SMEs, Social Economy Enterprises and other potential suppliers who wish to do business with the public sector. Companies can register on the portal and they will then receive alerts when a new tender/project has been published. Given that this is a relatively new system, it may be appropriate to increase awareness of how it works.

## **NEW SUPPORT PROGRAMMES UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

- i. **Procurement Spend Profile** – detailed baseline audit underway to establish and breakdown the Council's current procurement spend profile with a particular focus on scale and location of suppliers and classification of spend. This information will enable the council to develop **focused capacity building sessions** for local businesses.
- ii. **Enhancing Corporate Capacity and Knowledge** – Strategic Review of Procurement recently completed and Council approval secured to appoint a senior procurement and contract manager. Will actively work to build greater procurement awareness, knowledge, expertise and skills across Council departments and produce develop a strategic approach to council-wide procurement that enables the council spend to be directed towards meeting agreed objectives e.g. SMEs, Green Suppliers etc..
- iii. Structured programme of **awareness raising/capacity building workshops** for local suppliers:
  - How the Council procures goods
  - Tips on how to complete necessary paperwork
  - Suggestions on building consortiums to enable bidding for large contracts
  - Tips for selling
  - Information-sharing on upcoming opportunities
- iv. Workshops can be supplemented with **1-2-1 mentoring support** (the Council's Economic Development Unit currently holds a mentor database).
- v. **BCC Internet Update** – in conjunction with Corporate Communications, undertake a review and update the Procurement section on the Council's web-portal to make it more visible and accessible for potential local suppliers.
- vi. **Procurement Guide** – to review and update the 'Selling to Belfast' publication and development of a new user friendly 'How to do business with the Council Guide'. This can be used as a check-list when considering to submit a bid for a procurement contract.
- vii. **Debriefing Sessions** – 1-2-1 debriefing sessions with unsuccessful suppliers to go through step by step why a particular submission did not succeed and to provide advice for future bids.
- viii. **Procurement Surgery Sessions (PSS)** – Programme of specialist support for local businesses to help them get an understanding of the procurement process and to provide practical and 'hands on' assistance as they prepare quotations and build organisational capacity to become tender ready.

Sector Specific Procurement Surgery Sessions could be organised to specifically cater for specific upcoming contracts that are due to be advertised in approximately 12/18 months time (which the Council already post notifications on its website) – the aim being to give potential suppliers an insight to what is required by the Council whilst giving businesses the opportunity to feedback information and ideas that can help develop tender specification. Ultimately, this can help the Council in packaging their contracts appropriately and intelligently. Clearly this would have resource implications which would need to be bid for as part of the estimating process.



- ix. **'Consortium Toolkit'** – a digital guide and support for businesses who are developing, or considering developing, a consortia bid for a large procurement contract. The Toolkit would contain model documents, templates and business planning tools to create a business strategy that will equip organisations to make robust decisions. Research underway to explore potential of this for Belfast and the associated cost, which would be recouped through a minimal charge per a copy of the 'Toolkit'.

**Work is underway to develop a draft comprehensive programme of procurement support initiatives which the Council would intend to roll-out across the city and a report will be submitted to SP&R in November 2011.**

DRAFT

## External Relations and International Marketing

- The Council will develop an International Relations Strategy to support attracting tourism, foreign direct investment, commercial investment, European funding and talent to the city.
- In the first instance, we will carry out a review of all of our current international linkages to assess how the development of international civic relationships can support the development of investment and trade in the global market place.
- We are actively seeking to develop new linkages (civic business relationships) with other key cities – to enable us to draw from international knowledge and connections and to benefit from sharing best practice approaches. This will be the focus of the current programme of the 'State of the City' development debates.
- We will work with key agencies in the city to consolidate key strategic international relationships to support economic growth and competitiveness.
- At a more local level, we will develop an external relations strategy. This will ensure that Members lead the development of strategic relationships with key bodies in the city and the NI Executive to ensure that priorities for city success and competitiveness happen, resources and plans are aligned and that the Council has a coherent approach to engaging on key strategic issues which feeds back into its own governance and decision making structures.

## Marketing the City

- **Over £7 million** investment in next 4 years in supporting the marketing and visitor servicing activities of the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau; and leveraging an additional **£8 million** investment with over 500 local tourism, hospitality and service businesses benefiting from this activity.

## Developing the City's Tourism Product

- **£2m** investment over next 4 years in developing the city's tourism products in order to deliver the actions in the Integrated Tourism Development Framework. In particular we will focus on the 11 city places identified within the strategy to ensure that all parts of the city benefit from the potential growth in tourism over the coming years – particularly 2012/2013.