

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 9th December, 2015

## MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Kingston, McGimpsey and Stalford; and  
Councillors Attwood, Beattie, Craig,  
Dudgeon, Graham, Howard, Lyons,  
Magee, McAteer, McDonough-Brown,  
Ó Donnghaile and O'Hara

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. D. Durkan, Interim Director of Development;  
Ms. L. Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and  
International Development and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillor Kyle and Councillor Walsh.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 11th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st December.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Dates and Times of Future Meetings**

The Committee agreed to the schedule of monthly meetings for the period from January to December, 2016, commencing at 5.15p.m.:

- Wednesday, 13th January;
- Wednesday, 10th February;
- Wednesday, 9th March;
- Wednesday, 13th April;
- Wednesday, 11th May;
- Wednesday, 8th June;
- No meeting in July;
- Wednesday, 10th August;
- Wednesday, 14th September;

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- Wednesday, 12th October;
- Wednesday, 9th November; and
- Wednesday, 7th December.

The Committee also noted that additional special meetings would be scheduled when required.

**Request to Present to Committee – NI Water**

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from NI Water to attend a future meeting. The Chief Executive reminded the Members that it had previously agreed to hold a special meeting to discuss the city's water infrastructure in response to the presentation from the Director of Property and Projects at its last special meeting. The Chief Executive also suggested that the Committee might invite the Belfast Public Hire Taxi Service to the same meeting to discuss recent issues.

The Committee agreed to invite both NI Water and the Belfast Public Hire Taxi Service to a special meeting which would be scheduled for January.

**Request to Present to Committee – Ulster University  
Centre for Economic Policy**

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from the Ulster University's Centre for Economic Policy at its meeting on 13th January.

**Request to Present to Committee – the MAC**

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from The MAC at its meeting on 13th January.

**Presentation**

**Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) – Future Resource Request**

The Committee was advised that Mr. B. McGivern, BCCM Chairman, Mr. A. Irvine, City Centre Manager, Mr. H. Black, President of the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, and Mr. C. Sutor, Chairman of the Belfast One BID were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting.

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to:**

- **Introduce the presentation to this committee by Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM), setting out their proposed priority actions for the financial year 2016/2017**

- Outline the associated financial contribution requested from the Council towards the operational costs, in line with Council priorities for city centre regeneration.

## **2.0 Recommendation**

### **2.1 It is recommended that Members:**

- Note the proposed future role for BCCM, as set out in a recent independent review
- Agree the priority actions for the organisation for the coming year, in line with Council priorities for city centre regeneration, and agree that Council officers should work with BCCM staff to agree specific activities to deliver on these priorities
- Agree the financial contribution of £190,000 for core funding for the financial year 2016/2017, subject to approval of the requisite budget in the estimates in January 2016, and subject to agreed actions being undertaken and targets met
- Agree a contribution of £30,000 towards the employment of a BIDS Development Officer from Economic Development Unit estimates, subject to BCCM finding the match funding from other sources.

## **3.0 Key issues**

- 3.1** Members will be aware that the Council has supported BCCM since its establishment. The organisation performs a range of operational functions that contribute towards City Centre vibrancy, safety and security and public space management.
- 3.2** BCCM is funded from a range of sources, but its key funding partners are Belfast City Council, Department for Social Development and the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce.
- 3.3** BCCM provides services within a defined boundary in the City Centre area, stretching from Shaftesbury Square to the end of Royal Avenue/York Street. A section of that area is now part of the boundary for the Belfast One Business Improvement District (BID), which will be operational from April 2016. The BID focuses on providing additional services to businesses located within the agreed boundary. Work is currently underway to define the services the BID will support. However, it is important to note the BID services must be additional to those already provided by

statutory partners, as established by defining a baseline of current service delivery. BID partners are of the view that Council support for BCCM – although a discretionary activity – would constitute existing baseline services and therefore, there is an expectation the Council would continue to resource a similar level of service provision in the City Centre. The BID will then plan its activities to operate in addition to these core services. This approach is consistent with how BIDs are developed in other areas.

**3.4 At present, BCCM's work is focused round three key themes, namely:**

- **Economic Performance:** addressing issues such as reducing vacancies, supporting additional city animation and liaison with traders on key city events
- **Safer City:** this work includes the City Centre Beat initiative and the retail crime scheme
- **Public Space Management:** involves activities to maintain high quality public realm such as liaison with Belfast City Council's Cleansing Services on City Centre street cleansing regime and services, representing business interests on transport issues and working to address access barriers into the City Centre.

**3.5 In recognition of the need to look at their future operating strategy with the introduction of the BID, BCCM recently commissioned an independent review of the organisation. The report looked at how similar City Centre management services operated in those cities that also had Business Improvement Districts. It suggested that BCCM should focus on the following priority areas:**

- 1. Lead on the strategic development of the City Centre, liaising with partners such as Belfast City Council, DSD and private sector partners**
- 2. Promote and assist with BIDs in the City Centre**
- 3. Provide ongoing operational support to established BIDs on a contractual and non-contractual basis, acting as a co-ordinating forum as well as providing an evaluation framework**
- 4. Provide support and services for other non-BID and partnership organisations such as the Chamber**
- 5. Identify areas of the City Centre outwith the defined BID area and develop proposals for the continuation of services in these areas such as**

**business liaison, festive lighting and promotional banners.**

- 3.6** The BCCM Board has recently endorsed this approach and on this basis, the organisation is currently working on its business plan for the coming financial year. It is in the process of working with partners to secure the resources to deliver key services in line with the priority areas identified above.
- 3.7** Given the success of the Belfast One BID, BCCM considers there are opportunities to develop additional BIDs. In particular, it considers that a BID would support the development of the main office area to the rear of City Hall – the Linen Quarter. This is in line with Council plans to support additional investment in that area through the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (CCRIS). BCCM is, therefore, asking that the Council provides support towards a dedicated member of staff for the coming year to undertake this activity. It is recommended that the Council provides up to £30,000 towards the costs in the coming financial year, subject to BCCM finding the match funding from other resources.
- 3.8** In recognition of the ongoing operational support role for BCCM in the delivery of City Centre support services, and taking account of the BID requirement to focus on additional activity, it is also proposed that the core funding for BCCM should remain at £190,000 for the coming financial year, subject to approval of the requisite budget in the estimates in January 2016 and subject to agreement with BCCM on activities to be undertaken that will help deliver on council priorities for city centre regeneration.
- 3.9** Members have already been advised that the BID intends to focus over half of its efforts and resources on city marketing. While this is not an area in which BCCM is operational, it may align with some of the activity currently undertaken by Visit Belfast. In this context, it will be important to consider how these activities can be complementary, in order to avoid duplication and maximise the impact of the investment. These discussions will be undertaken with both the BID and Visit Belfast in the coming months.
- 3.10** Resource Implications

It is proposed that core funding of £190,000 is provided to BCCM for the coming financial year, along with £30,000 one-

**off support towards BID development activity in other areas of the city. This funding has been set aside by the Council within its Economic Development Unit budget estimates for the coming financial year.**

**3.11 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

**No specific equality or good relations implications. BCCM's work will include activities to support access to the city centre for all."**

During discussion, Mr. Irvine explained to the Committee that BCCM acted as a one stop shop for interaction between businesses within the city and local authorities and that it was currently working on its business plan, in conjunction with council officers, which would contribute towards the council's overall regeneration plan for the city. He advised the Committee that BCCM was currently working on 23 projects which fell into three key themes, namely, the city's economy, managing the public space within the city and making Belfast safer.

The Members were advised that 84% of businesses had voted yes in favour of investing a total of £6million over 5 years into the Belfast One BID, which had a focus on the retail core of the city. He explained that BCCM now wanted to develop a second BID, focusing on the commercial district behind the City Hall. Mr. McGivern advised the Members that "BID Two" would be aimed at the business traveller and highlighted the Colmore district in Birmingham which demonstrated the improvements which could be made to a business district by taking into account the entire journey from arrival into the city through to the business district itself. The BCCM representatives stated that they would therefore seek to connect BID Two with the new Transport Hub in Great Victoria Street.

A number of Members pointed out that the proposed BID Two was the same area as the Council led "Linen Quarter" framework and sought assurances that the BCCM would engage with the Council, particularly its City Centre Regeneration Team, to ensure that the work on the BID complemented the Council's own objectives. The representatives from BCCM thanked the Committee for its consideration and retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the request from Belfast City Centre Management in respect of a longer term financial commitment but the Chief Executive explained that the Council must consider the amount of this funding each year during its rate setting process.

The Chief Executive also provided some clarity to Members, after which the Committee:

1. noted the proposed future role for the Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM), as set out in a recent independent review;

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2. agreed the priority actions for the organisation for the coming year, in line with Council priorities for city centre regeneration, and agreed that Council officers should work with BCCM staff to agree specific activities to deliver on those priorities;
3. agreed the financial contribution of £190,000 for core funding for the financial year 2016/2017, subject to the approval of the requisite budget in the estimates in January 2016, and subject to agreed actions being undertaken and targets met; and
4. agreed a contribution of £30,000 towards the employment of a BIDS Development Officer from the Economic Development Unit estimates, subject to BCCM finding the match funding from other sources.

**Business and Economy**

**Cathedral Quarter BID – Update and Request for Support**

The Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development advised the Members that a funding request had now also been received from the Cathedral Quarter Trust (CQT) to support the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) in the Cathedral Quarter.

She outlined that work was now under way to create a BID which would cover the Cathedral Quarter area of the city, involving around 600 properties. The Members were advised that the draft business plan for “Destination CQ” had been launched in late November 2015, with the ballot opening on 3rd March 2016 and closing on 14th April 2016. If the ballot was to be successful, it was anticipated that the Destination CQ BID would generate an annual income of around £300,000 from the levy. The draft business plan contained a range of priority actions under four themes of Create, Celebrate, Invite and Inspire. The Members were advised that the main driver would be to maintain and develop the vibrancy of Belfast’s cultural district.

The Committee was reminded that, in September 2015, the CQT had asked the Council for a sum of £29,000 towards resourcing the development of the Destination CQ BID but that the Council had not been in a position to provide that level of funding at that time. The Trust had now submitted a request for £10,000 towards the development work, and was seeking match funding support from both the Department for Social Development (DSD) and Tourism NI (£30,000 in total being sought). The Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development advised that this funding was available within current budgets.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the request for support which had been received from the Cathedral Quarter Trust for resources towards the development work on the “Destination CQ” BID;

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2. agreed to allocate £10,000 from existing budgets towards the activity, in the current financial year, subject to CQT attracting match funding from other funders; and
3. agreed that the bid ballot should be run by a third party, Electoral Reform Services, and noted that all costs associated with the ballot will be paid by the BID.

**Start-Up and Social Enterprise Support**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to:**

- Update Members on the transfer of local economic development functions from DETI/Invest NI to the Council under Local Government Reform (LGR)
- Provide an overview of the proposed way forward for the delivery of business start and social entrepreneurship support

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 It is recommended that Members:**

- Note the work undertaken to date to develop a regional business start programme and secure ERDF funding for this programme
- Approve the recommendation to extend the delivery of the Regional Start Initiative until October 2016, or until the new regional business start programme is operational, whichever is earlier
- Note the work undertaken to develop a pipeline of support from start up through to business growth, incorporating specialist support for social entrepreneurship
- Approve the proposal to develop a programme of activity for social enterprises start-up support, to be met through the transferring budget.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Transfer of functions update**

**As Members will be aware a number of economic development functions transferred from DETI/INI to councils in April 2015. These included:**



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- Enterprise awareness (with a particular focus on under-represented groups and targets of areas of disadvantage)
- Start a business activity (referred to as Go For It programme)
- Social enterprise (referred to as the Social Entrepreneurship Programme - SEP)
- Youth enterprise.

- 3.2** As a result of this transfer, councils are now responsible for the associated job creation targets identified by the Northern Ireland Executive. For the current financial year this equates to a target of 325 jobs promoted for the Belfast City Council area. The primary mechanism for the council to achieve these targets is through the Go For It programme. There are currently no additional targets for councils in relation to social entrepreneurship and enterprise awareness. The budget transferred to council to deliver the associated functions and targets is £411,984 in the current financial year. This allocation will be used in its entirety for the delivery of the transferring functions.
- 3.3** To allow for a period of transition, it was agreed that Invest NI would develop a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with all councils to continue the delivery of the Go for It and Social Entrepreneurship Programmes (SEP) until the conclusion of their contracts. Since April 2015, there have been over 330 business plans created and 264 jobs promoted in Belfast through the Go for It programme.
- 3.4** Whilst there was no opportunity to extend the SEP beyond its contract end date of July 2015, there has been a level of flexibility with the Go For It programme, with potential for an extension until October 2016. Currently the contract has been extended until March 2016, pending a decision from councils as to the content and format of a regional business start programme to replace this initiative.
- 3.5** The eleven councils recently commissioned an appraisal and business case to inform future business start support. The recommended approach was the creation of a single regional contract building upon the existing Go for It programme with some enhancements such as additional workshops and 1-2-1 mentoring. It may be possible to secure ERDF funding for this programme, and, if successful, this will lever up to 80% of match funding towards eligible costs associated with this programme. Councils are collectively developing a funding application to Invest NI to support this new programme; however it is expected that the

decision on this funding will not be made until April 2016, at the earliest.

**3.6** If the funding application is successful, a subsequent procurement exercise would need to be undertaken to appoint a delivery organisation for the new programme. The timescale for this means that a new council-led business start programme is unlikely to be operational until summer 2016, at the earliest. In the interim period, it is proposed that councils continue extending the current RSI contract until the new programme is operational. The benefit of this approach is that it will ensure continuity of service provision pending the implementation of the new programme.

**3.7** **Social Entrepreneurship**

The social economy sector is strong in Belfast and the city is home to over one third of all social enterprises across the region. Social enterprises contribute towards the overall economic performance of the city, as well as helping achieve wider social and environmental objectives. Social enterprises operate on a similar business model to private businesses; however the principal difference is how these organisations use their resources to address societal and/or environmental inequalities and challenges as opposed to an operating for a profit motive alone.

**3.8** Whilst responsibility for social entrepreneurship has transferred to councils through LGR, the development of social economy policy and a number of key initiatives aimed at developing the sustainability and growth of the sector has been retained by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI). Initiatives supported by DETI include support for Social Enterprise NI (SENI), the representative body for the sector.

**3.9** DETI, in partnership with DSD and Invest NI, also manage a £4million pilot project, funded by the Northern Ireland Executive's Delivering Social Change Framework. Through this programme, 11 social enterprise hubs have been developed in the 9 Social Investment Fund (SIF) zones, of which 4 are located in Belfast. The hubs offer support for new and emerging social enterprises, providing locations where social economy businesses can operate on a 'test-trading' basis, with capacity building and training support also provided. The timeframe for the pilot project is 2 years and it is understood that funding for these projects is expected to conclude between April and June 2016, with no

opportunity for extension at this stage. There has been some work done to evaluate the impact of these links, but this information is relatively limited at this point.

- 3.10** Over the past number of years the Social Entrepreneurship Programme (SEP) has been the regional support initiative to support the creation of new social enterprises. The programme recognised the need to develop early stage social enterprises by building their start up capacity and their operating models. In the period 2012-2014, 98 groups from the Belfast area accessed support. Since the conclusion of the SEP in July 2015, start up support for social economy sector has been mainly provided through the social enterprise hubs project detailed above.
- 3.11** In recent years, a growing number of community and voluntary organisations have been transitioning or developing social enterprise trading arms. This situation is reflective of a changing funding environment where levels of grant funding are diminishing with a move towards service commissioning. This changing environment is driving increasing levels of demand for social enterprise start up support, with groups keen to explore whether this model can work for them.
- 3.12** To support the needs of the social economy sector, it is proposed that council efforts should focus on supporting new and emerging social enterprises within the city. This can be achieved through the development of a specialist support programme, specifically aimed at the pre-start and start-up stage of a social enterprise's life cycle. The proposed intervention will aim to stimulate levels of early stage social entrepreneurial activity through awareness raising events and will also provide tailored 1-2-1 support for new social entrepreneurs and transition groups – those moving from a funded model towards greater sustainability. The types of support available will include ideas generation, development of governance structures, business planning and social impact measurement. It is expected that up to 50 social entrepreneurs or groups will be supported through this activity through 1-2-1 and group based workshops/events each year.
- 3.13** Recognising that, once established, social enterprises operate as per normal commercial models, it is proposed that support for existing social enterprises will be delivered through mainstream economic development provision. However it is acknowledged that specific marketing and

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**promotional activities will need to target this sector and encourage engagement.**

**3.14 Financial & Resource Implications**

The cost associated with existing and future business start activity will be delivered within existing Economic Development unit activity and the transferring budget of £411,984.

The proposed social entrepreneurship programme is expected to incur an annual cost of £50,000 per annum or £150,000 over a three year delivery period. Due to the timescales involved in procuring a delivery agent for this initiative it is intended this programme will not be operational until the 2016/17 financial year. The budget for this programme will be met through the transferring budget.

**3.15 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

Each of the programmes referred above will be equality screened. The initiatives will be designed and delivered to remove barriers to participation, in particular by persons from under-represented groups or living in areas of deprivation.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**City Centre Regeneration and Infrastructure**

**Transfer of DSD Regeneration Powers**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1** The purpose of this report is provide Members with an update on the status of the proposed transfer of Urban Regeneration and Community Development powers, and associated budgets, from the Department for Social Development (DSD) to Council in April 2016.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** Members are asked to note the contents of the report including:

- (i) the decision taken by Full Council on 1 December 2015, to call for the NI Assembly to undertake an early review of the decision taken by DSD not to transfer regeneration powers in April 2016;

- (ii) the urgent meeting requested between a all-party deputation from the Council and the Social Development Minister, Mervyn Storey MLA, to examine all what alternative arrangements could be put in place to enable the Council to utilise key regeneration functions on behalf of DSD in the event of the non-transfer of these powers;
- (iii) correspondence to be issued to DSD seeking agreement permitting the use of/transfer of assets at nil cost to the Council to enable physical regeneration projects to happen at both a city and neighbourhood level; and
- (iv) the work underway by the Council to support and stimulate the further development and regeneration of the city including the lobby for greater devolution to city-regions.

### **3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1 As Members will be aware in April 2016, the Council was due to become the regeneration authority for the city and to inherit additional powers and budgets from the Department for Social Development (DSD). This would have included an enhanced responsibility for, among other things, leading both citywide strategic urban regeneration and smaller scale area-focused neighbourhood regeneration activity through the utilisation of comprehensive development powers. The Council would have also been given responsibility for developing and delivering the successor programme to Neighbourhood Renewal and the allocation of a substantial revenue grant funding package.

### **4.0 Key Issues**

- 4.1 On the 26 November 2015, the Social Development Minister, Mervyn Storey MLA confirmed that the transfer of regeneration powers to councils as planned in April 2016 would now not happen. This is the second time the planned transfer has been postponed with the original transfer scheduled for April 2015 as part of the wider Local Government Reform process. This time round, however, there is no future date set out as to when (or even if) these important functions would transfer back to local councils.
- 4.2 The non-transfer of key regeneration functions, particularly Comprehensive Development Powers and the ability to acquire land for regeneration purposes, will seriously hamper the ability of the Council to take forward major investment, development and regeneration plans; unlocking

and realising the potential of flagship schemes (e.g. North East Quarter, Northside) and reinvigorating key areas in the city (e.g. Linen Quarter, Cathedral Quarter, Western Quarter). It will constrain the ability of the Council to fully deliver Members' ambitions and priorities emerging from the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, support investment in the city centre which will grow the economy, create jobs and prosperity and improve quality of life for our citizens. It will also impact upon the ability of the council to:

- Create the conditions and opportunities to invest in Belfast, supporting economic growth & prosperity
- Provide the required level of confidence to investors considering developments in Belfast – investors want a one stop shop approach
- Ensure a targeted and holistic approach is taken to addressing blighted areas and development sites across the city including the city centre which is the regional gateway
- Ensure public spaces are managed and improved in a coherent way
- Ensure greater alignment of physical regeneration with the emerging local development plan

**4.3** It makes no sense that Councils are now charged with bringing forward local development plans and community plans, setting out a vision for their areas in terms of commerce, town and city centres, housing, accessibility, economic development and improvements in local neighbourhoods only to have a separate government department hold the powers for comprehensive development schemes as well as drawing up masterplans & delivering local projects driven by different priorities.

**4.4** Members will be aware that Full Council, at its meeting on the 1 December 2015, agreed that a call be submitted to the NI Assembly (and Executive Ministers) to undertake an early review of the decision taken by DSD not to transfer regeneration powers in April 2016. It was also agreed that Council officers do their utmost to work around such a decision to the city's benefit.

**4.5** As instructed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee a formal request has been submitted for a cross-party delegation to urgently meet with the Social Development Minister, Mervyn Storey, MLA. The purpose of this meeting is to explore what alternative arrangements could be possibly put in place to enable the Council to utilise regeneration powers on behalf of DSD (and

incoming new Department for Communities) to ensure the continued development of the city over the coming months. The Council has been exploring a range of options including:-

- (i) **Agency Agreement - Enter into an 'Agency Agreement' under section 104 of the Local Government Act 1972 which enables the Council to undertake regeneration powers on behalf of the department and access associated funding. This would require the consent of the Minister.**
- (ii) **Alternative partnership arrangements – entering into a partnership agreement with DSD utilising legislative vehicles such as e.g. a Memorandum of Understanding which could underpin a shared agreement and responsibility to deliver key development schemes based on the exercise of the statutory powers of each organisation.**

**4.6 Each option would require the agreement of the Social Development Minister and it is important that the Council proactively seeks to secure such agreement as it is of mutual benefit to both organisations. It is also important that the Council has an opportunity to work alongside DSD (and incoming new Department for Communities) and input into any processes put in place to determine the future allocation of both capital and revenue funding within Belfast. The Council would also seek to work with DSD and central government to ensure that major development schemes within the city come to fruition.**

#### **Asset Transfer**

**4.7 In anticipation of transfer, the Council has already entered into various agreements and are currently in discussion with DSD in respect of certain DSD assets which are required to facilitate the delivery of a number of key regeneration projects contained within the Council's Investment Programme and/or City Centre Investment Plan.**

**4.8 To date the DSD has worked with the Council to facilitate projects involving land assets owned by the Department and have not sought market value for sites due to their pending transfer to Council under local government reform. The pragmatic approach taken by DSD has been to assist Council in bringing forward key projects and have permitted work to be undertaken on their land, by way of licence or similar legal agreement, in advance and in anticipation of transfer in April 2016.**



- 4.9 It is important to note that investment decisions have already been made and projects are being delivered in respect of some assets which DSD own or have legal interest in, such as Girdwood and the Waterfront Hall. In other cases there are emerging council projects that affect DSD owned assets such as proposed playground and leisure schemes across the city.
- 4.10 Again, as the transfer is no longer happening in April 2016, the Council is seeking to secure agreement with DSD which permits the use of/transfer of assets owned by the Department at nil cost to the Council to enable physical regeneration projects to happen at both a city and neighbourhood level. It is important to recognise that the lands held by DSD are for regeneration purposes.

Continuing to Invest in the Regeneration and Development of the City

- 4.11 The new larger Belfast City Council remains committed to using its new powers to drive economic growth attract investment, create jobs and improve the quality of life across the city. Our plans include a physical investment programme valued in excess of £400million over the next number of years, with £185million of investment already completed or underway across Belfast. This includes key economic infrastructure projects such as, for example, £29.5m extension to the Waterfront Hall creating a world class conference centre, £18m investment in Girdwood Community Hub opening in January 2016, and a £9.1m Innovation Centre opening in summer 2016.
- 4.12 There is a momentum gathering pace across Belfast particularly in the property, hotel, office and student housing sectors, but we've got to harness it now. To ensure Belfast punches above its weight, we have to make it easy to do business in the city, develop key city infrastructure, maximise investment opportunities and connect local people to jobs and opportunity. It is important to recognise that delivering the outcomes set out within the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy can only be achieved in partnership and working jointly on key projects.
- 4.13 To this end strategic partnerships are being formed including a City Centre Development Board which is seeking to develop implementation and resource plans to deliver Members' ambitions for the city centre. Furthermore, a 'Belfast Strategic Issues Group' has recently been established, comprising of senior representation from

Executive departments (i.e. Permanent Secretaries) and chaired by the Chief Executive of Belfast City Council. The core focus of this group is to encourage greater alignment and integration between policies, plans, programme and initiatives and where possible to support the delivery, in a holistic way, of key development schemes including critical city infrastructure projects.

- 4.14 A key lever for the Council is the recent creation of the £18.7m City Centre Investment Fund which will help incentivise private sector investment in the city address potential areas of market failure and enable key regeneration projects to happen through the potential targeted acquisition of strategic development sites. Work is also underway to develop a 'Place Positioning' Strategy which will promote Belfast as a major tourism and investment location and seek to secure further foreign direct investment into the city.

#### City-Region Devolution

- 4.15 In February 2015, the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee considered a Notice of Motion entitled 'City Growth'. The motion stated:

*'Belfast City Council: notes that the RSA City Growth Commission recognises that major city regions, including Belfast, are the main drivers of economic growth; and that the British Government has undertaken 'City Deals' with 28 cities outside London, including Glasgow, to boost infrastructure investment, promote economic growth and create jobs.*

*Accordingly, the Council will consider how the recommendations by RSA City Growth could be promoted to enhance Belfast's position as a city region. The Council agrees to develop an action plan to seek to secure a 'City Deal' for Belfast which will support our ambitious plans, enhance the rate base, boost investment, promote economic growth, create jobs and ensure that the benefits of economic growth reach disadvantaged communities'....*

- 4.16 The Council now intends to pursue an agenda for greater devolution to the city-region. This will seek to promote the role of Belfast (and cities) as economic drivers and major contributors to regional growth and prosperity. It will also seek to establish a differential relationship between Belfast, the NI Executive and central government.

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- 4.17** There is a growing trend towards greater localism and place-based packages which involve the devolution of powers and budgets alongside new innovative policy, legislative and fiscal regimes which are empowering cities and local authorities to develop their area, improve public services, and boost the local economy. The associated introduction of new funding models such as City Deals is enabling cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, and Glasgow to unlock the development potential of their locality. It is also providing such cities with access to specified funding to invest in key growth areas, provide critical city infrastructure, deliver key regeneration and development schemes, and support specific programmes such as e.g. skills, employability and business start-up.

**Financial & Resource Implications**

- 4.18** There will be financial/resource implications attached to the non-transfer of regeneration powers and budgets to the Council given the fact that these were being considered as part of the Council's overall approach & funding towards the delivery of regeneration activity within the city.
- 4.19** Further detailed reports on the financial and budget implications will be brought back to Committee in-line with the budget estimates process and timetable.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications**

- 4.20** Development of new policies and/or service delivery models will be subject to equality screening and, where required, EQIA process."

After discussion, during which a number of Members expressed their disappointment that the regeneration powers would not be transferring to the Council in April 2016, the Committee agreed to the recommendations set out within paragraph 2 of the report and agreed also that the issues within the report should be raised with the NI Select Committee.

**Tourism, Events and International Relations**

**Cultural Framework –  
Draft Action Plan 2016-2020**

(Ms. E. Henry, Assistant Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager, attended in connection with this item)

The Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development reminded the Committee that, at its meeting in August 2015, it had given approval to commence the process of developing a new action plan for the period 2016-2020 to support the

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Cultural Framework for Belfast. The Cultural Framework had been developed in 2012 and was based around 4 key themes, namely, Distinctly Belfast, Inspiring Communities, Attracting Audiences and Strengthening the Sector.

She advised the Members that, following a significant programme of sector engagement, a new draft Action Plan for 2016-2020 had now been developed and that, since August 2015, the following work had been undertaken:

- A series of sector workshops focused on Heritage, Inspiring Communities, Attracting Audiences, Developing People and International Connections;
- A “State of the sector” survey carried out to establish the current position of the cultural sector in Belfast; and
- Meetings with a number of key stakeholders, including the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Tourism NI and Visit Belfast.

She reminded the Committee that a significant issue for the cultural sector had been the level of public funding compared to other parts of the UK and Ireland and in recent years that had continued to decline. She highlighted, therefore, that this was likely to increase the requests submitted to the Council for support but that there was no additional budget available for grant funding. In response to this situation, she advised the Committee that the Council would continue to provide support and deliver development programmes to help organisations diversify their income streams and secure funding from other sources. This was outlined in the Strengthening the Sector theme of the Action Plan.

After the Assistant Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager had addressed a number of the Members’ questions, the Committee:

1. noted and agreed the contents of the Cultural Framework for Belfast – Draft Action Plan 2016-2020 (available on modern.gov) as a basis for public consultation; and
2. agreed to consider the revised version of the Action Plan after the conclusion of the consultation exercise in April 2016.

**Bid for 24 Hour World Endurance  
Championship 2017 (Athletics)**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 **Over the last year Council Officers have been working with the local organising committee, who operate under the auspice of Athletics Northern Ireland, in their bid to secure the 2017 Twenty-Four Hour World Endurance Championship. This paper contains a request for approval of an underwriting letter of support in order that the organisers’**

bid can be endorsed by United Kingdom Athletics (UKA), which in turn will allow the submission to be presented to the International Association of Ultrarunners (IUA) in order to secure the event for Belfast

**1.2** For Councillors' information, the IUA operates under the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

**2.0** Recommendations

**2.1** Committee is asked to consider whether

- a letter of support, underwriting up to a value of £50,000, the bid for the World 24 Hour World Championship in 2017, should be issued by Council to United Kingdom Athletics. This will enable the bid to go in-front of the International Association of Ultrarunners in order to secure the event for Belfast.

**3.0** Main report

**3.1** Key Issues

This event would be staged from the 30 June to the 2 July 2017, and would attract approximately four hundred participants, accompanied by four hundred coaches and support staff. It is also estimated that the event would attract around 1,000 spectators and create approximately 5,000 bed-spaces, which in turn would generate £364,000 additional economic activity for Belfast.

**3.2** The main race elements of the event would take place in the Council owned Victoria Park, with the opening and medal ceremonies being staged at Belfast City Hall. Both these elements are subject to Council approval. Three hundred of the proposed competitors would come from out-of-state and the event would be in keeping with the Belfast Agenda, in that the Championship would not only help the local economy through tourism bed-nights, but would portray the city as an active and vibrant place to visit.

**3.3** To date Council Officers have issued general letters of support to assist the local organisers, who operate under the auspice of Athletics Northern Ireland. However, United Kingdom Athletics have now indicated that they will not support the bid unless an underwriting commitment is made by a commercial sponsor or public body. The total cost of staging the event is £78,761 and the organisers have secured £28,761 from commercial sponsors and other

sources, including personal loans. However, the local bid group has been unable to gain an underwriting commitment for the outstanding £50,000, thus Belfast City Council is being to act as guarantor for the bid up to the amount stated £50,000.

**3.4 Financial & Resource Implications**

The organisers have given assurances that they will address the cash shortfall prior to the event. Any underwriting arrangement agreed by the Council would be subject to a final business case and legal contract. They have also stressed that the likelihood of Belfast City Council being asked to pay the full £50,000 is low, with the Council's commitment likely to be £10,000, which would be sought via Belfast City Council's annual Support for Sport Events grants scheme.

**3.5** To date Belfast city Council has made no resource commitment to this event or its bid. However, if Council agrees to underwrite the proposal, and the bid is successful, it would mean that BCC would be exposed to a possible £50,000 shortfall in 2017. Therefore, Members are asked to note that Officers would attempt to address the financial implications as part of the Development Department's budgets for the 2017/18 period.

**3.6 Equality & Good Relations Implications**

**Belfast City Council Officers will work with the local organisers to ensure that all sections of society in Belfast can become involved in the event."**

After discussion, during which a number of Members sought clarification regarding the issue of underwriting, it was

Moved by Councillor Dudgeon,  
Seconded by Alderman McGimpsey,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the report for a period of one month to allow more information to be submitted to the Committee.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor McDonough-Brown,  
Seconded by Councillor Attwood,

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- (i) That the Committee agrees that a letter of support be issued by the Council to United Kingdom Athletics, underwriting up to a value of £10,000 towards the bid for the 24 Hour World Championship in 2017 to enable the bid to be considered by the International Association of Ultrarunners in order to secure the event for Belfast;
- (ii) that additional financial support of £40,000 would be subject to a staged assessment to ensure compliance;
- (iii) that officers, in conjunction with the Legal Services section, draw up a contract to ensure that the organisers have made genuine attempts to attain funding from other sources and to demonstrate delivery ability at key milestones; and
- (iv) if the conditions are not met that the Council can end the contract and withdraw, or limit, its support.

On a vote by show of hands, thirteen Members voted for the amendment and three against and it was declared carried.

The amendment was thereupon put to the meeting as the substantive motion and agreed.

**Request for Council Support – Chinese New Year 2016**

The Interim Director of Development reminded the Members that the Council's International Relations Framework promoted civic and business linkages in key global markets, including China. He explained that one of the main partners was the Confucius Institute at the Ulster University. The Committee was advised that, on 18th February 2016, the Confucius Institute, in partnership with the Culture Office of the Chinese Embassy in London, planned to hold a celebration to mark the Chinese New Year. The Institute was inviting the famous Chongqing Sichuan Opera House to perform the Sichuan opera for a Belfast audience. The Members were advised that this event would bring senior officials from the Chinese Embassy in London to officially recognise Chinese New Year and, in particular, the opening of the Chinese Consulate General in Belfast. The Director advised that an audience of 3,000 people was expected to attend the event.

The Committee was advised that the overall budget for hosting the event was an estimated at £24,000 and that the Institute had requested a sum of £4,000 from the Council.

The Committee agreed that Council support be provided, up to a value of £4,000, towards the Chinese New Year 2016 celebrations and noted that this was available from within the council's International Relations budget.

### **Nashville Visit and Action Plan**

(Ms. L. Leonard, European and International Relations Manager, attended in connection with this item)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval for an outward Nashville visit in March 2016 (11-16 March 2015).**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:**

- **agrees to the Nashville visit, with participation of the Lord Mayor and Chair of the Nashville Steering Group or their nominees, and the development of a 2015/16 action plan through the Nashville Steering Group and noted that a budget of £5,000 from the International Relations budget has been set aside for work on Nashville, including this visit.**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Members may be aware that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Mayor of Nashville and the Lord Mayor of Belfast in 1994 to promote cultural, tourism and business development opportunities between the two cities.**

**3.2 There was limited activity in the early days due to limited resources locally and changes in the political environment in Nashville, but around 2010 there was renewed interest in expanding the link from local partners who had made some progress in developing their own bilateral links with partners in Nashville. These include:**

- **Staff exchanges, joint research and host visits between Queen’s University and Vanderbilt University**
- **Establishing and building on the Belfast – Nashville Songwriters Festival**
- **Participation in the annual Music Cities Irish Festival**
- **Development of links between Ulster University and Google Fibre to facilitate exchange programmes**
- **Development of links with Ulster and Belmond Universities**



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- Exploration of healthcare links and conventions between the NI based EU Connected Health Alliance and the US Commercial Service
  - Exploration of partnerships between Visit Belfast and the Nashville Visitor and Convention Bureau.
  
- 3.3** The council convened a steering group of interested stakeholders including Ulster and Queen's Universities, Invest NI, Visit Belfast, Tourism Ireland, Tourism NI, Generator NI, BBC and Belfast Nashville Songwriters. They agreed to a collective programme of activities covering a wide range of issues including education, economic development, genealogy and cultural tourism.
  
- 3.4** Individual partners have been working on their respective areas of collaboration such as QUB's links with Vanderbilt University and the successful Belfast-Nashville Festival. The challenge has been to consider whether and how the Council can add value to those links and, as such, whether there needs to be a focus on exploring opportunities for additional links with Nashville and what the Council's role should be in that regard.
  
- 3.6** In September 2015, Nashville elected a new Mayor – Megan Barry. The Mayor's Office has indicated an interest in exploring opportunities for further mutual linkages between Nashville and its partners, including Belfast. The Sister Cities lead in Nashville has been in regular contact and has confirmed that a delegation from Nashville will travel to Belfast before the Sister Cities Summit in Dublin (April 2016).
  
- 3.7** In order to establish relationships with the new Mayor and to help test out the new city positioning narrative to international markets, it is proposed that the Lord Mayor (or nominee) visits Nashville in early March 2016. Invitations may also be issued to partners (subject to them covering their own costs) to visit the city at the same time and maximise the impact of the Belfast presence in Nashville. The objectives of the Belfast City Council visit would be to:
  - Ascertain the political support for additional links between the cities – including exploring the potential resource commitment on the Nashville side to undertake trade missions and develop joint projects around tourism, healthcare and music
  - On the basis of this engagement, explore potential areas for collaboration for the coming year and beyond

- Explore opportunities to profile Belfast as a cultural tourism destination in the Southern States and increase tourism revenue from this market
- Promote Belfast's investment message, as articulated through the place positioning work
- Profile Belfast as a creative business location by engaging with the Belfast- Nashville Songwriters' Showcase which will be broadcast to over 60 million homes in USA
- Plan ahead for the visit to Belfast by Nashville partners in April 2016, as part of the Sister Cities network conference in Dublin.

**3.8** There are opportunities for engagement in and profiling at a number of significant events including:

- The Music City's Irish Festival on 12 March hosted with the Sister Cities and Mayor's Office, profiling the creativity and vibrancy of Belfast. The Lord Mayor has been invited to attend a reception of delegates and music businesses and to work on incorporating a Belfast branded stage with Belfast musicians in future years. A Queen's and Vanderbilt float for the festival is also being developed
- Tourism Ireland's tourism showcase event on the same day, profiling Belfast as a business and leisure tourism destination
- Activities as part of the Belfast-Nashville Songwriters' Showcase, including events to be broadcast across USA. The Lord Mayor has been invited to be filmed at this with the Mayor of Nashville to introduce Belfast artists at the event. This programme will be broadcast to over 60million homes in the USA.

**3.9** Financial & Resource Implications

A budget of £5,000 from the International Relations budget has been set aside for the work on Nashville, including this visit. This will cover travel and accommodation costs for the Lord Mayor, Chair of the Nashville Steering Group, (or nominees) and one officer.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

No specific equality or good relations implications."

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After discussion, during which the Chairperson of the Nashville Steering Group provided the Members with detailed information on the work of the Group, the Committee:

1. agreed to the Nashville visit, with participation of the Lord Mayor and Chair of the Nashville Steering Group, or their nominees, plus one officer, and the development of a 2015/16 action plan through the Nashville Steering Group and noted that a budget of £5,000 from the International Relations budget had been set aside for work on Nashville, including this visit;
2. noted the proposal to review the International Relations framework and agreed to consider the revised framework at a future meeting of the Committee; and
3. agreed that officers should present additional updates on international activity on an ongoing basis.

**Operational Issues**

**Go Ultra Low City Scheme - ecarni Bid**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

To update Members on the £10 million submission to the Office of Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) competition for NI to become a regional exemplar for the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs). The bid, which is 100% funded, is led by the Department of Regional Development Ecarni team, and Department of Environment in conjunction with local Councils. Belfast City Council is the lead Council.

**2.0 Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- Note the measures outlined in the NI ecarni bid
- Agree that Council will sign the NI Ultra Low Emission ‘charter’ as part of the bid process

**3.0 Main report**

- 3.1 The UK Climate Change Act introduced in 2008 sets a target of 80% reduction in green house gas emissions by 2050. As the transport sector is responsible for around 20% of the UK’s emissions particular focus is being placed on the transition to alternatively fuelled vehicles in order to meet this target.

In early 2015 £35 million was allocated to a 'Go Ultra Low City Scheme' to encourage city regions to take a lead role in the transition to electric and other ultra low emission vehicles. This is an opportunity for a city/region to build an international reputation for the uptake of ultra low emission vehicles – a major growth market and technology over the next fifteen years.

In April 2015 the DoE/DRD E-car team proposed leading a regional bid to the scheme in partnership with Belfast City Council. Following an initial application the Northern Ireland bid (ecarni) was shortlisted with ten other UK cities; four of which will be allocated up to £10 million.

The NI bid is designed to contribute to the wider sustainable transport vision for the region. It will use targeted policy and financial incentives, alongside strong marketing and innovative ICT to inform and monitor measures, to promote and build momentum for a major change in the uptake of ULEVs across the region. Since April the DRD e-car team have been working with the public and private sector to draft the bid, which includes the following measures:

1. Put in place a Diesel to Electric vehicle scrappage scheme to encourage the switch to EV's to owners of pre-2006 diesel vehicles which emit very high levels of pollution.
2. Provide incentives for an EV motability scheme to encourage greater uptake of EV as the car of choice for eligible customers.
3. Create an EV salary sacrifice scheme for NICS with further implementation to the wider public and private sector
4. Create a strong marketing and communications campaign which will increase the awareness of ULEVs , promote the individual measures and develop an online digital platform which will act as a 'one stop shop' for EV drivers.
5. Develop a Northern Ireland Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy and international policy guidance which focuses on the development of short , medium and long term polices and measures to encourage the uptake of ULEVs including where appropriate amendments to local legislation and policy in the transport , planning and environmental sectors.
6. Advance the legislative process to permit all approved electric vehicles in motorway bus lanes for a dedicated period of time.

- 7. Work with local Councils, private sector and procurement partners to establish a series of highly visible dedicated rapid charging areas and parking zones in strategic locations throughout Northern Ireland.**
- 8. Create a highly branded EV car pool with associated infrastructure for staff use across all government departments, public and private sectors Advance the legislative process to ensure that only these highly branded EVs can access city centre bus lanes on arterial routes.**
- 9. Through the use of data analytics and behavioural monitoring mechanisms, work with Invest NI, Queen's University, Ulster University and University of Hertfordshire to identify and monitor the outcome of, measures to be implemented by the bid.**

**One of the key criteria of the bid is evidence of support from key regional organisations. The bid team has asked all partners involved in the bid to demonstrate their support for the bid in principle by signing up to an Ultra Low Emission 'charter'. All partners are asked to sign up to general promotion and marketing activities as outlined (some of which the Council is already involved with) and some more specific activities:**

- 1. Introduce a ULEV policy throughout the Council by June 2016, which will demonstrate our commitment towards sustainable development and corporate social responsibility.**
- 2. Investigate the establishment of an EV Car Pool for Council staff by September 2016, in conjunction with the overall 'highly branded' and visible EV Car Pool being implemented by the ecarNI team.**
- 3. Assist in the identification of land within Belfast City Council area which could be utilised for 'EV Rapid Charging and Parking Zones' in the Council area, in particular, land in or adjacent to Air Quality Management Areas.**
- 4. Encourage the formation of an ecarNI members club in the Council area for existing and future EV drivers, who will meet frequently to exchange new information and share EV driving experiences.**
- 5. Deliver a programme of marketing activities in partnership with the ecarNI team, to help promote ULEVs in the council area.**
- 6. Engage with the local business and wider community to promote and develop the ecar brand to facilitate a change the region's travelling practices**

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**It is acknowledged that some of the specific measures will require more investigation and, if the bid is successful, further agreement with DRD on the appropriate level of funding required.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairperson