

Development Committee

Tuesday, 16th December, 2014

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);
Aldermen M. Campbell, Kingston
and Stoker; Councillors Beattie,
Convery, Kelly, Kennedy, Kyle,
Magee, McAteer, Ó Donnghaile,
Reynolds, Spence and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;
Mrs. L. Toland, Head of Economic
Initiatives and International Development;
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer; and
Miss. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Aldermen Ekin, Stalford and Webb and Councillors Keenan and Mac Giolla Mhín.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd November.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman indicated that they were members of the board of Belfast City Centre Management and of the Cathedral Quarter Trust. It was noted that they had been nominated by the Council to represent it on those bodies.

The Rank Organisation – Proposed Casino

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 21st October, it had agreed to receive a further deputation from the Rank Organisation in respect of its proposals to develop an entertainments' complex in Belfast, which would include also a casino. Accordingly, the Chairman welcomed to the meeting Sir Richard Needham, representing the board of the Rank Group, Mr. M. Jones, Managing Director of Grosvenor Casinos, together with Mr. J. Minne of JRPNI Consulting, who were in attendance to address the Committee.

Sir Richard indicated that the Rank Group would be keen to bid as part of a consortium for a licence to develop a multi-entertainments venue in Belfast. He stated that such a complex would, in addition to a casino, include a range of entertainment facilities, such as a cinema, ten-pin bowling, bars, restaurants and, potentially, a hotel.

**Development Committee,
Tuesday, 16th December, 2014**

He pointed out that current legislation within Northern Ireland did not permit the development of a casino. However, he suggested that an opportunity to amend that legislation would be presented in 2015 when the Northern Ireland Assembly would consider the new Northern Ireland Gambling Bill. He requested that the Council might consider lobbying for an amendment to that bill to allow for the establishment of a casino in Belfast.

In response to a range of Members' questions, Sir Richard outlined the steps which would be taken to address issues related to problem gambling at any facility which might be established in Belfast. He outlined also the type of jobs which would be provided through the development and suggested that the proposals would represent a significant skills development opportunity for the City. The deputation then retired from the meeting.

During discussion, Members made the point that any suggestion that the Council should lobby central government to amend the gambling laws was somewhat premature. Further Members, whilst acknowledging the benefits which would be derived through the job creation and investment which would result from the development, indicated that the Council would need to explore in detail the implications of casinos, specifically in terms of the negative impacts of gambling.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed to request that a report be brought forward which would explore the following:

1. The Council's potential future role in the regulation of casinos in Belfast;
2. The economic benefits which casinos might bring to the City; and
3. To explore further any evidence that casinos would exacerbate the issue of problem gambling and impact upon health.

It was agreed in the first instance that the matter would be referred to the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its consideration on the completion of the report.

(The Deputy Chairman (Councillor Spence) in the Chair.)

Rural Development Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 In October this year Members received an update on the Rural Development Programme (RDP) for 2014 to 2020 which the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) will continue to oversee as the Managing Authority. Since this update DARD has issued a number of communications and hosted events to raise awareness and engage relevant stakeholders in the formation of Local Action Group (LAG) governance structures. It has also called for volunteers from**

the existing LAGs to form a Facilitation Group to assist this process.

- 1.2 The European Commission has stipulated that 'no one single interest group shall represent more than 49% of the voting rights' for the new LAGs. This means that public sector representatives (considered as a single group) must not exceed 49% of the makeup of the LAG Board. Public sector representation is defined as elected representatives and is a requirement. Equally, no one single social partner group can occupy more than 49%.
- 1.3 DARD will contract with the newly formed LAGs and the LAGs will, in turn, seek to enter into a service level agreement for related administrative services with the appropriate lead Council for the area which in our case is the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.
- 1.4 It is expected that, even though elected representatives of the new councils will be minority partners on the LAG Board (49%), the Chief Executive of Lisburn City Council will act as the Chief Accounting Officer. To account for this, a protocol is currently being developed by DARD to protect the governance and accountability of each Council tasked with facilitating the new LAGs. It is also important to note that a Rural Tourism scheme to the value of £10 million will operate under the new Rural Development Programme. We understand this will be managed directly by DARD and is ring-fenced for Councils.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 DARD is working to a timescale whereby the social partner representation to the new LAG will be in place by 19th December 2014 and the new Board will be formed by the end of January 2015. Councillors on the Board will be considered as holding positions of responsibility and positions will be filled by applying a process outlined to Councils by the Department of Environment.
- 2.2 Appointment of Councillors to the LAG will take place at each AGM of the councils when the selection process is run, in accordance with the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. To deal with the interim period until 1st April 2015 a sub-group of councillors will come together to fill the positions on the LAG Board temporarily.
- 2.3 Once the LAG Board is formally constituted, each Board member will assume responsibilities as a Director of the Company. Board members will be responsible for the design

**Development Committee,
Tuesday, 16th December, 2014**

and implementation of a Local Development Strategy. They will be responsible for agreeing the operations of the LAG such as opening calls for applications, assessing applications and taking decisions on which projects to support.

- 2.4** It is anticipated the LAG Board will comprise of 12 to 18 members and that it will meet 6 to 9 times per year depending on business. Board members will also be invited to participate in additional thematic working groups or other panels.
- 2.5** The current LAG and Joint Council Committee (JCC) each have 11 places for elected members; 7 from Lisburn, 3 from Castlereagh and 1 from Belfast. At its meeting in April 2008, Development Committee agreed to appoint the then Chairman of the Committee (or nominee) to the JCC and Deputy Chair (or nominee) to the LAG. BCC has been represented by Cllr Guy Spence who sits on the LAG and Cllr Arder Carson who sits on the JCC. Only a LAG will operate to oversee the next round of funding and Belfast City Council is required to nominate interim representation. However, there is no guidance on the number of places available.
- 2.6** Members may wish to note the following nominations to the interim LAG Board from Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. Nominations were made using the same selection process as the Police & Community Safety Partnership Board (PCSP):
- DUP – Alderman Allan Ewart; UUP – Cllr James Baird; SDLP – Cllr Pat Catney; Alliance – Cllr Tim Morrow and Presiding Officer – Alderman James Tinsley**
- 2.7** In order to ensure continuity, it is proposed that the current council representatives of the RDP governance structures, namely Councillor Arder Carson and Councillor Guy Spence, fill the temporary positions on the new LAG, until 1st April 2015.
- 2.8** In the period 2014 to 2020 LAG Board members will oversee funding of £3.22 million which will cover the following measures:
- Rural Business Investment Scheme (for farm based and other rural based businesses)
 - Rural Basic Services Scheme - improving access to services, community centres, facilities, volunteer befriending scheme
 - Village Renewal Scheme – Hannahstown has already benefitted from this

**Development Committee,
Tuesday, 16th December, 2014**

- All Ireland Co-operation Scheme - Some ideas being discussed already include tourism around the canals and links with Belfast Hills and Wicklow Hills.
- Rural Broadband Scheme – consideration will need to be given to how this can align with the Superconnected Belfast project.

2.9 While the rural boundary area has not yet been finalised potential areas eligible for funding will include:

- Hannahstown, Edenderry, Old village of Castlereagh

The overall rural population is estimated at 4,756 and a mapping exercise is underway to provide more detail about these areas.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Resource implications are those associated with the role of interim and Board member and officer support from the European and International Unit.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 An equality impact assessment will be led by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

5 Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that the two current Elected Representatives, Cllr Guy Spence and Cllr Arder Carson are retained to sit on the interim LAG until 1st April 2015. Appointments to the LAG from 1st April onwards will be made in accordance with DOE guidance and advice from Democratic Services.”

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Requests for Assistance – Business Improvement Districts

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that, at the June 2014 Development Committee meeting, the committee agreed to provide £45,000 to Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) to support the recruitment of a member of staff to carry out preparatory work on a Business Improvement District (BID) for a defined area

within the city core. The council's funding was matched with a similar amount from Department for Social Development, with the funding to be allocated over an 18 month period.

- 1.2 BCCM – along with Cathedral Quarter Trust (CQT) and Lisburn Road Business Association (LRBA) – made a submission to DSD in late 2013 to become a pilot as part of a 'BIDs Academy'. This was an initiative to identify areas that had the potential and interest in becoming a BID area and to provide them with support to strengthen their initiative and make them better prepared once the BIDs legislation was in place and organisations were formally invited to apply to become a BID.
- 1.3 BCCM was one of the six successful projects selected to become a BID pilot. The other two Belfast areas – namely Lisburn Road and Cathedral Quarter – were also successful in their applications.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 One of the stipulations for those areas taking part in the BIDs Academy is that they provide a budget for a bespoke marketing campaign as well a dedicated person working on the development process on a full-time basis. The BIDs Manager for Belfast – who started work in early November 2014, has spent the majority of her time analysing and verifying the information presented by Land and Property Services (LPS) as well as establishing a working group of city centre businesses and representatives to lead and direct the BIDs process.
- 2.2 Cathedral Quarter Trust – who are co-ordinating the BID for the Cathedral Quarter area – have now written to the council to ask for a contribution of up to £37,000 towards a resource to carry out the BIDs preparatory work. Lisburn Road Business Association (LRBA) – who are coordinating the Lisburn Road BIDs application process – have also made contact with the council to ask whether any resources may be available to help them carry out the preparatory work. They have been successful in attracting £12,000 through Area Working Group funding but they consider that they will require additional resources to enable them to carry out the required preparatory work.
- 2.3 There is no available to budget to finance either of these requests. Members have already agreed to ring fence any available funding at the year end to cover the non-recurrent costs associated with local government reform. Therefore, Members would need to consider such funding as part of the

**Development Committee,
Tuesday, 16th December, 2014**

rate setting process. The department estimates will be considered by the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 16 January 2015.

3 Resource Implications

- 3.1 CQT have requested funding of £37,000 towards the cost of a BIDs Manager as well as some overheads. LRBA have not confirmed the scale of the financial request at this point. No provision has been made in current departmental estimates for either amount and members have already agreed to ring fence any available funding at the year end to cover the non-recurrent costs associated with local government reform.**

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

- 4.1 There are no specific equality and good relations implications.**

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 To note the requests for financial support towards the BID development process from CQT and LRBA.”**

The Committee noted the contents of the report and noted further that there existed no resources from within the Department’s budgets to meet either the request from the Cathedral Quarter Trust or any possible request from the Lisburn Road Business Association.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to defer, to its meeting in January, further consideration of the matter and requested that, in the meantime, officers would discuss with Belfast City Centre Management the feasibility of that organisation assisting the Cathedral Quarter Trust in its preparation work for the Business Improvement District project.

(The Chairman (Councillor Hargey) in the Chair.)

Events Bidding

(Mr. G. Copeland (Events Manager) attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Relevant Background Information

- 1.1 At October’s Committee, Members requested a list of potential international events that the Council, along with regional organisations, could bid for over the next five or so years. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to update Members on scoping work that the Council’s City Events Unit, along with**

input from key partners, has undertaken on a range of sporting and cultural events.

- 1.2 Since 1999 Belfast City Council, working with a variety of regional Government Departments, has been successful in bidding, securing and delivering a range of international events for the city. These events include: the IAAF World Cross-Country Championships; the IABA World Amateur Boxing Championships; the UEFA Under-19 European Football Championship; the IRB Under-19 Rugby World Cup; Sail Training International's Tall Ships Races; Viacom's MTV EMAs; the World Police and Fire Federation's World Police and Fire Games; RCS Sports' Giro d'Italia and various national and international competitions connected to the World Irish Dancing Commission.
- 1.3 However, after the Tall Ships event next year, the city will have only one national event programmed – the All-Ireland Irish Dancing Championships in November, 2016. There are currently no other significant bids for major national and international projects approved by Council for the period 2016 to 2021. Nor has the Council the current financial resources to pursue such bids, which will require BCC to identify measures to set-aside specific resources (financial and staff) to deliver at least one international event per year, as per the Council's events and tourism strategies, alongside an extensive domestic programme of annual events funded and/or delivered by the Council.

2 Key Issues

It is clear from a range of research that the impact of international and national events is a positive one on the city's economic, cultural and social life. However, any future positive benefits, from staging these events must be balanced against the financial constraints that the Council faces.

Examples of the recent benefits from large international events are as follows:

- The Tall Ships 2009 event generated £16 million for the local economy.
- The Giro d'Italia created a skills programme for over 1,500 volunteers.
- And the MTV EMAs was viewed by an estimated 1.2 billion people across the globe, while generating 669 million media opportunities.

**Development Committee,
Tuesday, 16th December, 2014**

In bidding, securing and delivering major international events the Council was in the position to do so via its allocated reserve budget. However, the current fiscal situation means that such finance is no longer available. Therefore, if Members approved the list, or part thereof, resources would need to be made available that is not in the Council's current medium term fiscal plan.

These events include national awards events similar to the BBC Sports Personality of the Year, international sports events such as amateur boxing championships, masters games and other annual peripatetic events. However, those events indicated below link to key Government Departments/Agencies strategic objectives and thus would allow the Council to move forward knowing that possible support may be available. In addition the events listed are also based on the likelihood of a successful bid. However, like all bidding processes it will be the event owners who decide, regardless of how well a Belfast 'pitch' is presented and funded.

Funding from Government Departments/Agencies would normally be made with an 'in principle support' basis. Unfortunately this means that no letter of offer would be made until a full business case is submitted to the Government Departments/Agencies and this normally only happens on the back of a successful bid.

If Members agreed to bidding for the list of events below and if the Council, with partners, were successful the draft programme of national and international events from 2016 to 2021 would be as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Cost to Council</u>	<u>Total Cost of the Event</u>
*2016	UK National Piping Championships	£180,000	£180,000 – totally funded by BCC
2017	National Triathlon Series event	£100,000	£200,000
2017	World Music and Dance (WOMAD) Festival	£100,000	£1,700,000
2017	UK National Piping Championships	£180,000	£180,000 – totally funded by BCC
2018	European Triathlon Series	£200,000	£400,000
2018	World Irish Dancing	£220,000	£400,000
2018	UK National Piping Championships	£180,000	£180,000 – totally funded by BCC
2019	World Triathlon Grand Final	£500,000	£2,000,000

**Development Committee,
Tuesday, 16th December, 2014**

2020	All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil	£500,000	£1,500,000
2021	Commonwealth Youth Games	£500,000	£3,000,000
	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>£2,660,000.00</u>	<u>£9,740,000.00</u>

*The 2016 All-Ireland Irish Dancing Championship has been agreed by Council at a cost £200,000

Over the normal calendar year the Council will deliver, on average, twelve large-scale public events. Estimated cost for these would be circa £1.1 million. These events range from St Patrick's Day, the Lord Mayor's annual event through to the Christmas Lights Switch-on.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 If all the events were agreed, the total delivery cost would be in the region of £10 million. Of this the Council would be asked to contribute £2.66 million over a five year period, alongside a significant level of Officer input.

3.2 There is currently no budget available to finance the projected £2.66 million contribution. Members have already agreed to ring fence any available funding at the year end to cover the non-recurrent costs associated with local government reform. Therefore, Members would need to consider such funding as part of the rate setting process. The department estimates will be considered by the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 16 January 2015

3.3 If the entire programme in Appendix A was agreed there would also be staffing implications in regard to the volumes of work across the Council's Departments.

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 As with all major civic events, public events like those listed have the potential to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and therefore promote good relations in the city.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are requested to provide guidance on the outline draft events in regard to bidding for these events. As stated this is not a definitive list and other projects are being explored, but those presented are based on work to date alongside potential partner organisations."

**Development Committee,
Tuesday, 16th December, 2014**

The Committee noted the report which had been presented and agreed that large-scale international events made a positive contribution to the local economy and promoted a positive image of the City abroad.

Members made reference also to the recently adopted Belfast Tourism Strategy and the effect of budget cuts across government and their associated impact on events across the City.

After further discussion, it was agreed that:

- a City-wide events strategy should be commissioned;
- international events should be considered within that context and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee should consider the resources required to deliver events, including large scale international events; and
- the opportunity to bid for the United Kingdom Pipe Band Championships should be considered by the Shadow Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 16th January, 2015.

South by Southwest 2015

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Background Information

- 1.1 Members will be aware that at the 15 April 2014 Development Committee, Members were informed of the activities delivered through Council’s participation in the South by Southwest (SXSW) Conference in March 2014.**
- 1.2 For the past four years, the Council has been part of a delegation that has attended South by Southwest in Austin, Texas with a specific focus on promoting the City’s music industry and promoting Belfast as a key investment location.**
- 1.3 SXSW includes a conference and exhibition as well as a series of pre-arranged meetings, seminars, networking events and creative showcases. Traditionally music focused, SXSW has seen a significant growth in the digital and film elements of the conference and as such is now seen as key business development initiative for companies in the priority sectors of Film, Television, Digital Media and Music.**
- 1.4 In consideration of the changing focus of the conference and the involvement of key stakeholders including Invest NI, Northern Ireland Screen, UKTI and Generator NI, an opportunity exists to review the Council’s future participation in SXSW.**

- 1.5 Officers have been engaging with the creative sector and key stakeholders, to scope out any potential role and future involvement by the Council, as part of a collective approach.**

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 SXSU has evolved in recent years to reflect the growth of the digital and film industries. Engagement with key stakeholders has identified the importance of reflecting this change, in any Belfast/Northern Ireland presence at the event**
- 2.2 The 2015 event will be held from 13-20 March and UKTI will again be coordinating the collective presence of participating cities and regions across the UK.**
- 2.3 For the 2015 event, funding has been secured from Invest Northern Ireland and Generator NI to support the business and artist delegation. To date, 21 local companies have been confirmed to attend made up of eight music business and 13 film and digital content companies. In addition the four artists selected to showcase at SXSU music are expected to be announced early January. The majority of the companies participating at SXSU are based in Belfast.**
- 2.4 For the 2015 event, Invest Northern Ireland and Generator NI will support participating companies and artists by providing up to 50% of the travel, accommodation and conference pass costs. Generator NI will also provide support on the ground during the SXSU music programme to help ensure local music artists avail of all showcasing opportunities presented to them.**
- 2.5 Discussions have also taken place with Northern Ireland Screen and Belfast based Double Band Pictures, to secure the screening of the bike racing documentary "Road", as part of SXSU Film. Following discussions with SXSU, it is anticipated that "Road" will be screened during SXSU with marketing support by NI Screen.**
- 2.6 Over the past four years Belfast City has led the SXSU mission, this has involved recruiting and supporting Belfast based creative businesses and artists; providing showcase, networking and exhibition opportunities for participants as part of the conference. Since 2013, the Council has secured the commitment and financial support from Invest NI and Generator NI in relation to business and artist participation, with Council contributing to the UKTI campaign to increase the profile of Belfast at the event and provide additional support to the business and artist delegation.**

2.7 Following discussions with UKTI the opportunity exists to again partner with UKTI, as part of a wider UK wider delegation for the 2015 conference. Partnership with UKTI will require a minimum financial investment of £10,000 for which the following will be provided:

- Presence at the UKTI exhibition stand during the Film and Interactive conference and the music conference. The exhibition stand will carry the council logo, alongside other UK cities, and provide meeting space for the delegation within the conference convention centre.
- Council's logo will also be featured on promotional material distributed by UKTI (posters, programme, advertisements), information on the participating companies and artists will also be included alongside a city narrative on investment and the creative industries.
- Use of the UKTI venue to host a business networking event for the delegation. This will provide participating companies with the opportunity to invite key clients, potential buyers and investors from the film, television, interactive and music sectors to enable them to demo products and services in a focussed and bespoke environment. In addition UKTI will also issue invitations to key international businesses interested in doing business in the UK and Northern Ireland. An opportunity exists for council to influence the invite list to maximise benefit for the city and participating businesses.

2.8 Without Council support to the UKTI campaign, participating businesses and artists will not avail of any of the activities outlined above. This will lessen the potential impact of the conference for participating businesses, through lack of profile and participation at bespoke events, which are crucial for the local delegation to meet and network with potential buyers and clients, in this very competitive marketplace. Due to the nature of funding provided by Generator NI and Invest Northern Ireland, they are unable to fund the UKTI element of the conference.

2.9 It is therefore recommended that Council support the UKTI campaign and to maximise the benefits from the event, it is proposed that the Chair and Deputy Chair (or nominees) along with one officer attend the SXSW event.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Participation in SXSW will require a budget of £16,000.

**Development Committee,
Tuesday, 16th December, 2014**

4 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

4.1 There are no specific equality and good relations implications.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to approve the financial resources and attendance of relevant officers/elected representatives at SXSW.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Wheelworks Art Cart

The Committee was advised that a request had been received from Wheelworks, a youth arts group based in Belfast, seeking financial assistance to oversee the replacement of its purpose-built mobile arts hub, that is, the Arts Cart. The Director reported that the Arts Cart was used by Wheelworks to bring high-quality arts provision to communities in which there existed a lack of arts infrastructure and where levels of engagement were below average. The current Arts Cart was 14 years old and it was deemed necessary to acquire a replacement. He indicated that the total cost of the project would be £212,000, with the Arts Council providing £200,000 of that amount. Accordingly, the Director indicated that the Council had been requested to fund the projected shortfall of £12,000, provision for which existed within current departmental budgets.

The Committee agreed to provide £12,000 to Wheelworks for the purposes outlined.

Relocation of Lagan Canal Trust

The Committee was advised that a request for financial assistance had been received from the Lagan Canal Trust to meet with the relocation costs associated with moving its offices from the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre to Navigation House in Lisburn. The Director indicated that the total cost of the relocation would be £16,800, which would be met by the Council, Craigavon and Castlereagh Borough Councils and Lisburn City Council. Accordingly, the Council had been requested to contribute a sum of £4,652.31, provision for which existed within current budgets.

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to contribute a sum of £4,652.31 to the Lagan Canal Trust as the Council’s contribution to that organisation to enable it to meet its relocation costs.

Get Belfast Reading Initiative

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1 Key Issues

1.1 In line with the vision of the Cultural Framework, Belfast City Council has developed the initiative ‘Get Belfast Reading’ to help attract audiences, inspire communities, and strengthen the local cultural sector. The main aims are to:

- increase awareness of and engagement in reading based activities
- stimulate the use of books and literature
- break down barriers to reading
- encourage attendance at literary events
- build awareness of local writing talent and literary heritage, and
- enhance literacy levels for all ages across the city

Get Belfast Reading will contribute to achieving targets in the Cultural Framework and benefits of the initiative will include:

- improved health and wellbeing
- enhanced quality of life through social interaction and pleasure
- educational benefits and longer term economic benefits
- events and visual elements have positive impacts on perception of the city – local, national, international

1.2 The initiative has been developed by Belfast City Council in consultation with relevant stakeholders including Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Libraries NI, Verbal Arts Centre, BookTrust, Linen Hall Library, the Reader Organisation, and the Read On, Get On campaign. The focus of the initiative is to encourage participation across the city and focus work where there is currently limited provision.

1.3 Belfast Book Boxes

A minimum of 15 Belfast Book Boxes will be created and installed at key community access points across the city (at least five outdoor and 10 indoor). They will be designed by an artist working within the community. ‘Book boxes’ is an established model that has been rolled out in other cities across the world, but this would be the first initiative in Northern Ireland.

- 1.4** The call to action is ‘take a book, read a book, return a book’. The aim is to stimulate an interest in books, increase access to reading material in areas far from libraries, and improve social cohesion and a sense of community. The book boxes will be promoted with events and programmes such as the ‘One City, One Book’ initiative. In addition to books, each box will also include information about local events and resources such as library, community, and arts centre activities.

1.5 **Shared Reading Initiative**

A number of shared reading groups will be established across the city. The call to action will be to make reading enjoyable, building the confidence, self-esteem and reading ability of all age groups with a focus on hard to reach groups. Key to this will be to train volunteer reading coaches in a high quality model of shared reading, in order to effectively engage new readers and audiences.

- 1.6** A number of community based ‘reading rooms’ have already been established in Belfast, led by Verbal Arts Centre. Libraries NI also have an active reader development programme. Interest in these has been strong and has attracted new participants and stimulated them to read (often Belfast focused) literature and be more confident in expressing themselves and sharing their stories. Groups meet in diverse and accessible venues including community centres, libraries, hospitals and arts centres. To date ad hoc approaches have been made by organisations seeking financial support from Council and there is demand for more groups to be established across the city. There is also a waiting list of volunteers who wish to become trained reading coaches. Get Belfast Reading would give structured support to help establish and maintain a number of reading rooms across the city.

Literary Belfast Resources

This strand will update and increase the accessibility of existing Literary Belfast resources to help raise awareness and knowledge for locals and visitors. This will include reanimation of the Belfast Writers app; an update of web resources; further promotion of the exhibition; and renewal of on-street visuals.

**Development Committee,
Tuesday, 16th December, 2014**

2 Resource Implications

2.1 Financial

A budget of £15,000 is included in the TCA unit's 2014/2015 budget. In kind support will be provided by stakeholders.

3 Equality and Good Relations Considerations

3.1 An equality impact assessment for the project will be carried out to ensure all areas of the city have the opportunity to benefit."

The Committee agreed to allocate a sum of £15,000 to oversee the initiative, provision for which had been included within the Department's revenue estimates.

Chinese New Year 2015

The Director highlighted the principal aspects of a report which outlined the series of events which had been organised to coincide with the Chinese New Year on 25th February, 2015. He indicated that the events, the total costs for which would be approximately £50,000, would be supported by a wide range of statutory bodies and agencies. He indicated that the celebrations would enhance and promote the International Framework and strengthen linkages with the Council's Sister Cities in China.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to contribute a sum of £3,000 towards the hosting of the events as outlined.

Shaftesbury Recreation Centre – Rent Review

The Committee agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 46, to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it endorse a revised rent of £36,700 per annum, which would be backdated to 3rd February, 2014, in relation to the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group's lease of the Shaftesbury Recreation Centre.

Markets' Staffing Review

The Committee noted an update report regarding the ongoing staff review of the Department's Markets Unit, specifically as it related to the St. George's Market. In addition, the Committee endorsed a number of recommendations which had arisen as part of that review and authorised officers to enter into discussions with the relevant Trades Unions in this regard on the understanding that a report on the outcome of those negotiations would be submitted to the relevant Committee for consideration in due course.

Chairman

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