

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 31st May, 2024

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Black (Chairperson);
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Beattie, Cobain, de Faoite,
M. Donnelly, R.M. Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson,
Garrett, Harvey, Long, Maghie, Maskey,
I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Nelson and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of
Corporate Services;
Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance
Manager.

Apologies

An apology was reported from Councillor Bunting.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson (Councillor Black) declared an interest in relation to agenda item 2a – Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme, in that she worked for an organisation which had delivered diversionary activities in August 2023, as part of the Feile an Phobail application, and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following two items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following two items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Members were also reminded that the content of ‘restricted’ reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as ‘confidential information’ and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

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**2024 Summer Community Diversionary
Festivals (SCDF) Programme**

(The Deputy Chairperson, Alderman McCoubrey, in the Chair.)

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided details of the assessments undertaken by officers and seeking approval to award funding for the 2024 Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme.

August Programme

The Committee was advised that 4 applications had been received for the August programme. The Director provided details of the projects and officer assessment scores for stage 1 and stage 2. Three applicants had passed both stages, with one applicant not having passed stage 1.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to award the funding as follows to the three groups which had passed stages 1 and 2:

<u>Applicant/Group</u>	<u>Amount £</u>
Feile an Phobail	100,000
Feile an hAbhann	75,000
Ashton Community Trust	<u>75,000</u>
Total	250,000

July Programme

The Committee was advised that 10 applications had been received for the July programme. The Director provided details of the projects and officer assessment scores for stage 1 and stage 2. Four applicants had passed both stages; one applicant had passed stage 1 but did not meet the benchmark at stage 2; and the remaining five applicants had failed to pass stage 1.

A Member referred to the proposed amount of funding to be allocated to each of the four successful applicants and made the point they should be allocated an equal percentage of the amount requested.

The Committee concurred with this view and agreed to adjourn for a short period to afford officers the opportunity to reassess the proposed allocation on that basis.

(The Committee stood adjourned for 10 minutes.)

Following reassessment of the proposed allocation of funding for the July programme, the Committee agreed to award the following to the 4 applicants which had passed stages 1 and 2:

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<u>Applicant/Group</u>	<u>Amount £</u>
Twaddell and Woodvale Residents Association	86,820.64
Eastside Partnership (Eastival)	64,334.09
Charter NI	36,821.41
Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT)	62,023.86
Total	250,000.00

The Committee agreed further:

- That any funding awarded would be subject to further engagement with groups and analysis of projects and associated budgets in line with Council due diligence procedures, this would include any outstanding financial and monitoring returns with regards to other Council funding. Funding would not be awarded until approved contracts were issued and signed.
- To approve those organisations seeking permission to use Belfast Parks for their event or activity and to delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to ensure the following:
 - Negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' and take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to:
 - The completion of an appropriate management plan,
 - The promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction; and
 - The promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence.

The Committee noted that the above recommendations were taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for 'Events', which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Councils Commercial team.

(The Chairperson, Councillor Black, in the Chair.)

Use of City Hall Grounds - National Graves Association

The Committee considered a report which sought approval for a request from the Belfast National Graves Association to lay wreaths at the Mary Ann McCracken statue and the statue of the Winifred Carney, which were located in the City Hall Grounds, on the anniversary of their deaths on 26th July and 21st November, 2024, respectively.

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During discussion, a Member sought clarification as to whether or not there was a Council policy which covered such requests or if granting the approval would set a precedence. Without such information he felt that he would not be in a position to make a decision on the application.

In response, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that she did not have that information to hand but could bring back a report to the next meeting.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor R-M Donnelly,

That the Committee agrees to accede to the requests.

On a recorded vote, twelve Members voted in favour of the proposal and none against, with six no votes and it was declared carried.

<u>For 12</u>	<u>Against 0</u>	<u>No Vote 6</u>
Alderman McCoubrey, Councillors Beattie, Black, Cobain, M. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett, Maskey, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin.		Councillors de Faoite, Hanvey, Long, Maghie, Nelson and Smyth.

**Glor Na mona - Croí na Carraige –
'The Heart of the Rock' Project**

A Member reminded the Committee that it had previously agreed to award funding of £500,000 to Glor Na mona for the Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' Project as part of the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF). He stated that group had submitted an application for funding to BIFFA, which closed later today, and was seeking a comfort letter from the Council in relation to the award of funding under the NRF and lease from the Council.

The Committee agreed to issue a comfort letter but noted that the application under the NRF and lease length was still subject to all the Council's processes.

Standing Order 14

The Committee agreed that, in accordance with Standing Order 14, the minutes be submitted to the Council meeting on 3rd June for ratification.

Chairperson