

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Monday, 28th April, 2025

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson); and
Councillors Beattie, Black, Brennan, Bunting,
de Faoite, R-M Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett,
Groogan, Long, Maghie, McDonough-Brown,
I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin and Nelson.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director
of Corporate Services;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance
Manager.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillor Cobain.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following three items are 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 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.

IFA DCMS Grassroots Funding Applications

The Committee considered a report seeking Members' views on whether to support applications to the IFA DCMS Grassroots Investment Fund for projects at a number of identified sites at the Hammer Playing Fields, the soccer pitch at Glen Road Heights, Ormeau Park and the Henry Jones Playing Fields; and which noted the constraints identified at the shortlisted sites which would prevent applications at this stage.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the Committee agrees not to support any applications to the IFA DCMS Grassroots Investment Fund for projects at any of the sites which had been identified.

On a vote eight Members voted for the proposal and eight against, with one no vote. As there was an equality of votes, the Chairperson cast his second and casting vote for the proposal and it was declared carried.

Pilot Sunday City Animation Project

(The Committee agreed that the restriction on the debate on this item could be lifted and the recording published at a later date.)

The Committee considered a report which sought approval to undertake direct engagement on a proposed Sunday Trading Pilot in the city centre to reflect a notice of motion which had been agreed by the Committee in September, 2024.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Groogan,

That the Committee agrees not to proceed with the pilot scheme but instead look at schemes based on the Open Botanic model and/or car free Sundays.

On a vote, five Members voted for the proposal and twelve against and it was declared lost.

Further Proposal

Moved by Councillor Nelson,
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin,

That the Committee agrees:

- to note that work was underway to design a proposed pilot city animation project for Sundays during the summer;
- that there is engagement between the BIDS and the Belfast Chamber to discuss the proposal, with discussions also to take place with local shopping centres, the Trade Unions and Translink; and
- to note that in order to facilitate the pilot, this may require a temporary relaxation of enforcement of the relevant provisions of the Shops (NI) Order 1997. Proposals for such arrangements to be included in a subsequent report for consideration.

On a vote, twelve Members voted for the further proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

**Animation Activity to support
the Open Championship 2025**

The Committee considered a report which sought approval to support a programme of animation and activation aligned to the 153rd Open Championship which was being held at Royal Portrush in July.

After discussion, the Committee agreed not to support the proposals as outlined but that a further report be submitted to the May meeting with a scheme to support the hospitality industry and other businesses, which would encourage footfall into the city and a possible animation programme.

Standing Order 14 - Submission of minutes to the Council

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 1st May for ratification.

Chairperson