

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 16th June, 2023

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

- Members present: Councillor Black (Chairperson);
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Beattie, Cobain, de Faoite, M. Donnelly,
R.M. Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, Hanvey, Long,
Maghie, Maskey, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin,
Nelson, Nic Bhranair, Smyth and Whyte.
- In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Mr. D. Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Ms. L. Caldwell, Director of External Affairs, Marketing and
Communications;
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Ms. N. Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Bunting.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT BY THE COUNCIL AT ITS MEETING ON 1st MAY, 2018

Restricted Items

Summer Community Festivals Programme

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 21st April, it had considered a report providing details of the initial assessment of applications which had been received under the Summer Community Diversionary Festivals Programme for 2023, with the £500k being made available by the Council to be divided equally between projects being delivered in July and August.

The Committee had agreed to allocate £202,255 and £250,000 to those groups which had met the assessment criteria for projects to be delivered in July and August respectively. In terms of the underspend of £47,745 for the July programme, the Committee had granted approval for Council officers to meet with the five unsuccessful groups, namely, the Greater Village Regeneration Trust, the McDonald Centre, The Hubb Community Resource Centre, Phoenix Education and Woodvale Cricket Club, to determine if they had the capacity to deliver a reduced project from that which they had proposed initially. The Committee had granted approval also for a review to be undertaken of the Summer Community Diversionsary Festivals Programme moving forward.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reported that all five organisations had since advised that they were willing to deliver a reduced programme and had the required capacity to do so. The Greater Village Regeneration Trust had also confirmed that it had the ability also to deliver its original programme in full should funding be made available.

With that in mind, he recommended that the Committee consider which of the following options, if any, it wished to adopt:

- i. to allocate £9,549 to each of the aforementioned five groups to deliver a reduced July programme in this instance; or
- ii. to award the £47,745 in full to the Greater Village Regeneration Trust, which was next in the scoring list and had passed one stage of the assessment process, bearing in mind that the aim of the Programme was to support larger programmes at a minimum of £25k; or
- iii. to not award the £47,745 to any group/s under the Programme for 2023.

The Director went on to recommend to the Committee that, should it decide to proceed with options i. or ii. above, approval be granted to any of those organisations wishing to use the Council's Parks for their event or activity and that authority be delegated to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to 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; and
- the promoter resolving any operational issues to the satisfaction of the Council and meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service, including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence; and

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey,

That the Committee agrees, in light of the recent announcement by The Executive Office of a significant reduction in the amount of funding to

be allocated to the Council this year under the District Council Good Relations Programme, that the underspend of £47,745 be used to develop a capacity building programme to be delivered in the autumn to groups which might wish to deliver activities next July, with any funding remaining to be returned to Departmental budgets.

Amendment

Moved by Alderman McCoubrey,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

That the Committee agrees to allocate the entire underspend of £47,745 to the Greater Village Regeneration Trust, on the basis that it had been the only one of the five unsuccessful applicants to have passed one stage of the assessment process.

On a vote, four Members voted for the amendment and fifteen against and it was declared lost.

The Committee subsequently agreed to adopt the proposal which had been made by Councillor Long and seconded by Councillor Hanvey.

Update on the Beacon Programme

The Director of Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that the beacon programme, which was open only to constituted community/voluntary groups and had been in existence for over fifteen years, supported the provision of beacons as an alternative to traditional bonfires over the 12th of July period.

He reminded the Committee further that, at its meeting on 21st April, it had granted approval for Council officers to contact the eight groups which had availed of a beacon in 2022, as well as four others which had expressed an interest subsequently, to determine if they wished to be placed on the list for this year.

He reported that two of those groups had since confirmed that they did not require a beacon and drew the Committee's attention to the list of ten organisations and locations which were being recommended for approval in 2023. The Committee was asked to note that, as had been the case in 2022, mitigations would need to be put in place at the Brown Square and White City sites and that the report on the Grove Street East site would, as previously, advise that there was potential for significant damage due to the distance factor.

The Director went on to state that a request had also been received through Action for Community Transformation for a beacon to replace a traditional bonfire at Shankill Terrace and California Close. Should the Committee accede to that request, the provision of a beacon would be subject to the usual terms and conditions and a fire engineer's report would be required. Initial indications had indicated that the land on which the beacon would be placed was unregistered.

In terms of funding, the current budget allocation for beacons was £72,000, which included a £15,000 contribution from The Executive Office through the District Council Good Relations Programme. The provision of eleven beacons would, the

Director pointed out, cost a minimum of £81,103.75, excluding VAT, and would require the realignment of existing budgets.

After discussion, the Committee granted approval for the eleven groups set out in the table below to participate in the beacon programme for 2023 and agreed that any residual funding from the £47,745 which had, earlier in the meeting, been allocated to the development of a capacity building programme for groups which might wish to deliver activities next July, be referred to the bonfire programme.

Location	Group
Haig Street/Lord Street Junction	Diamond Project (Charter NI)
Clara Street Clara Street – Junction with Ravensdale Street	Charter NI
Grove Street East Grove Street East/Channing Street	East Belfast Alternatives
Highspring Avenue Green Area off Blackmountain Grove	EPIC
White City	Loughview Community Action Group
Ainsworth Avenue Hardcore Area at Ainsworth Avenue end of Ceylon Street	West Belfast Athletic and Cultural Society
Wheatfield Action Project Ballysillan Park, facing Wheatfield Drive	Wheatfield Action Project
Brown Square Middle of Road at bottom of Melbourne Street	Brown Square Development Association
Cregagh On the mound in the green space across from Trassey Close in Cregagh Estate	Cregagh Community Association
Dunmurry 2 Auburn Place, Dunmurry, Belfast	Dunmurry Community Association
Shankill Terrace and California Close	Action for Community Transformation

Chairperson