

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 12th August, 2015

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Howard (Deputy Chairperson); and the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Spence); Aldermen Kingston, McGimpsey and Stalford; and Councillors Attwood, Beattie, Craig, Dudgeon, Graham, Kyle, Lyons, Magennis, McAteer, Ó Donnghaile and O'Hara.

Also attended: Councillor D. Boyle.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mrs. L. Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development;
Mrs. S. Toland, Lead Operations Officer/
Head of Environmental Health; and
Miss L. Francey, Democratic Services Officer.

(Councillor Howard, Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair.)

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Hargey, Magee, McDonough-Brown and Newton.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th June 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 July.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Welcome

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Mr Donal Durkan, the Interim Director of Development, and Councillor Donal Lyons, who had replaced Councillor Claire Hanna. She welcomed them to the meeting and wished them well in their new roles.

Invitation to Visit Queen's University Belfast

The Committee considered an invitation which had been received from the Queen's University Belfast, inviting Members to undertake a site visit to the University's Purpose-Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) at the Elms Village, off the Malone Road. It was suggested that the visit would be followed by a presentation regarding their Capital Development Plan.

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that those who were also Members of the Planning Committee would need to be mindful that the university would, in due course, be presenting a number of planning applications to that Committee. She advised that the Town Solicitor could provide individual Members who were on both Committees with specific advice.

The Committee agreed to accept the invitation to undertake a site visit to the Queen's University Elms Village and to attend a presentation on its Capital Development Plan.

Presentations

Javelin - City Centre Retail Positioning Study

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Mr Andrew Leung, Associate Director at Javelin, was in attendance and he was welcomed to the meeting. Mr Leung presented an overview of the findings from the Belfast City Centre Retail Positioning Study which had been commissioned by the City Centre Development Team to inform the approach to the proposed retail development in the North-East Quarter and other potential developments. The Chief Executive reminded Members that this study formed just one part of the overall City Centre Regeneration Plan for Belfast.

Mr Leung advised Members that Belfast currently ranked 18th in the VENUESCORE ranking of city centres across the UK but that it had peaked at 14th position in the past, shortly after Victoria Square had opened in 2008. He highlighted that Belfast was currently under performing and was not attracting sufficient spend from some of the more affluent people living outside the City and concluded that Belfast should focus on attracting more aspirational retailers into the City Centre, such as John Lewis Partnership or an equivalent, in order to help stimulate retail-led development.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Leung for his presentation and he left the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the Javelin report and agreed that further reports would be brought back on building retail within the city centre. In addition, the Committee agreed that it would receive information as part of the parking strategy, on the potential for reduced rates or free parking being used to attract more people into the city centre at certain times, including examples of where this had been used elsewhere, for possible inclusion within the City Centre Regeneration Plan.

Waterfront Hall Branding

(Mrs Susie McCullough, Head of Marketing and Commercial Development, attended in connection with this item.)

The Chief Executive outlined to Members that the Belfast Waterfront was currently undergoing a £30m investment programme which would see the venue transformed into a new world leading conference venue, attracting up to 50,000 delegates per year and resulting in an economic impact of £45m per year to the city. She also indicated that a Belfast Positioning Strategy was in development and that this would be presented to the Committee at a later date.

Mrs McCullough, Head of Marketing & Commercial Development, was welcomed to the meeting and presented an overview of a survey which had been carried out to gauge the impressions which people held of the Waterfront and Ulster Halls. She provided a summary of a number of the comments which people had made about the venues, which included parking issues and a perception that, because they were Council-run, they were not commercially competitive.

She reminded Members that Heavenly branding consultants had been tasked with developing an engaging Brand Strategy which would effectively portray the Council's ethos and one which was owned by staff and stakeholders. She explained to Members that the project would address the Waterfront as a standalone brand, look at how it co-existed with the Ulster Hall brand and how it played a part of the wider Belfast City and Northern Ireland brands. Members were advised that Heavenly would present the new Brand Strategy to the Committee at its workshop on 26th August.

After discussion, the Committee thanked Mrs McCullough for her presentation, noted the update on the Belfast Waterfront Brand Strategy and noted that Heavenly would present to Members at the City Growth and Regeneration workshop on Wednesday 26th August.

Belfast Agenda

Regional ED Functions - Communications and Operational Management Plan

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), in particular the future Business Start Initiative**

- Provide an overview of the proposed way forward for the delivery of local entrepreneurship and business growth programmes across the city
- Outline the range of initiatives eligible for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 – 2020 with the potential to draw in up to 80% match funding from EU and Invest NI.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the update on the transfer of economic development functions and the work undertaken to develop a regionally-consistent business start initiative for future delivery
- Approve the recommendation to work in partnership with other councils to deliver a regional business start programme and commence procurement of the new programme in order to ensure seamless service delivery for local start-ups
- Note the pipeline of projects being developed to create a continuum of support from start up through to business growth, incorporating tailored and sector-specific support
- Approve the submission of ERDF applications for planned projects.

3.0 Key issues

3.1 As a result of Local Government Reform (LGR), a number of economic development functions transferred from DETI/Invest NI to councils. The functions transferring aim to accelerate and sustain scalable local economic growth. They include:

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

- 3.2** The amount of budget transferred to Belfast City Council for delivery of these functions in the current financial year is £411,984. This allocation will be used in its entirety for the delivery of the transferring functions. Due to transfer of responsibility, councils are now responsible for the associated job creation targets identified by the NI Executive. For the 15/16 financial year a target of 325 jobs promoted applies to Belfast City Council for these specific programmes. However, it is understood that Belfast City Council will want a much greater emphasis placed on job creation than solely through these programmes. The same applies to promotion of good enterprise and small business start up.
- 3.3** As Members will be aware, as an interim measure and to maintain a level of provision, it was agreed to continue the existing support measures in place through Invest NI until the conclusion of their contracts, in 22nd October 2015 (Go For It Programme) and 4 July (SEP). Service Level Agreements have been developed with Invest NI to enable the delivery of these contracts from April 2015 until their conclusion.
- 3.4** In March 2015, Belfast City Council, on behalf of the 11 local authorities, commissioned an appraisal and business case to inform future delivery of business start-up support post-October 2015. The purpose of this work was to identify the optimal approach for future business start support, taking account of the need to improve the currently low levels of business start across the region – and in Belfast in particular. It has been agreed that each council will inform and develop their own local approach to the other transferring functions referenced in 3.1 with the exception of start a business activity (please refer to section 3.9 for BCC proposed activity in these areas).
- 3.5** The appraisal considered a range of potential approaches and concluded that the optimal approach for councils and businesses would be to run a single regional contract, building on the existing level of provision provided through the current Go For It Programme through additional workshops and 1-2-1 mentoring. The recommended option also identifies the need for centralised resources for marketing purposes, management of the regional contract and development of a Client Relationship Management (CRM) system to facilitate participant tracking and performance management.
- 3.6** Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council has agreed to lead the procurement of the new regional programme on behalf of the 11 local councils. The cost of the preferred option, over a three year period will be dependent on competitive

procurement and eligibility of ERDF and Invest NI match-funding. It is anticipated that the future service will be delivered on a cost neutral basis within the parameters of the council's local economic development revenue budget including the transferring budget of £411,984 to deliver the transferring functions. The economic appraisal has also forecast that the programme has the potential to exceed the Programme for Government targets.

- 3.7 While the aspiration is that there will be a minimal gap in provision between the end of the existing SLA (October 2015) and the beginning of the new, regional contract, officers are working on contingency plans with Invest NI. This may include an extension of the current SLA.

3.8 Pipeline of Support

While the transferring functions focus on business start-up, the council has always provided a range of support initiatives for pre start-up and post start-up businesses to help improve business competitiveness and productivity and help companies explore new markets.

- 3.9 In conjunction with the transfer of functions, officers have been designing a new pipeline of support incorporating early-stage entrepreneurial activity (pre-enterprise), high growth support for key sectors, including social enterprise and interventions for existing businesses. The aim of this work is to create a continuous pipeline of support to facilitate the growth of local businesses at each stage of their life cycle. This support will take account of the wider range of support mechanisms available to local businesses and will seek to avoid duplication of effort. The pipeline is likely to involve the following elements:

- **Pre-enterprise Programmes:** a range of initiatives aimed at promoting self employment as a viable career choice. These programmes will particularly target areas of deprivation and under-represented groups and have a combined target of 1,200 individuals engaged over 3 years
- **Business Growth Programme:** offering a combination of 1-2-1 support, bespoke procurement-focused workshops and opportunities for peer learning, this programme will support up to 400 businesses across a three year period
- **High Growth Programme:** supporting new and existing businesses with significant opportunities for growth in terms of employment and/or export potential, this

programme will offer specialist mentoring, product development and market development support. The programme will support 120 businesses over a three year period, with a particular focus on key growth sectors (including creative and digital industries, green technology, social enterprise and hospitality sectors).

- **Procurement Advancement Programme:** this initiative aims to support up to 120 companies over a three year period to access sales opportunities arising from the public sector. Support to be provided will include 1-2-1 mentoring, skill development workshops and meet the buyer events.

3.10 The Economic Development Unit has previously been able to draw down ERDF match funding for many of its activities, through the fund's Local Economic Development (LED) measure. It is expected that the new ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014-2020 will open for applications in the coming weeks. Through this funding, eligible projects can access up to 80% of match funding from ERDF and Invest NI.

3.11 A key challenge of the new programme is its ambitious job creation targets, as eligible projects must demonstrate how they will deliver 1 new job per £1,000 of project costs. Taking into consideration the challenging job creation targets to be achieved for eligible projects, officers have been reviewing planned activity to identify which projects could be most eligible for ERDF funding. The pipeline of projects identified above is being developed with the view to submitting an ERDF application for match funding, where eligible.

3.12 Financial Implications

The anticipated cost for the regional business start-up programme will be dependent on competitive procurement and eligibility of ERDF and Invest NI (INI) match-funding. It is anticipated that these elements of the service will be delivered this year on a cost neutral basis within the parameters of the council's local economic development revenue budget including the transferring budget of £411,984 to deliver the new functions. The economic appraisal has also forecast that the programme will exceed the Programme for Government targets. However, a full review of the Council's role in supporting business start up and growth will be carried out during this year and the Council may well need to increase or realign budget allocations to further support these activities, given the current under performance of the City when it comes to business start up and survival.

3.13 In addition, the pipeline of projects outlined in 3.9 has a combined cost of £955,000 based upon a three year delivery period, with an annual cost of approximately £320,000. Subject to a successful ERDF application, and to leveraging the maximum available match funding resources, the cost of delivering these initiatives for the council would be approximately £65,000 per annum or £191,000 over a three year delivery period. Match funding resources for these projects have been accounted for in the current Economic Development budget.

3.14 Equality and Good Relations Implications

Each of the programmes referenced 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.”

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

Business Improvement Districts

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on proposals to establish two Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in Belfast and to set out some of the strategic and financial implications for the council, focusing on how this can support our work to develop the city centre.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the proposals to establish two Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) within the city centre area, including the pending dates for the ballots in the Belfast One and Destination CQ areas
- Agree to delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Resources to cast the vote on behalf of the council in the ballot for the Belfast One Business Improvement District
- Note a further report will be tabled to September Committee recommending a yes or no vote from Council for the Belfast One BID dependant on further necessary considerations referenced within this report

- Agree that the bid ballot should be run by a third party – Electoral Reform Services – on behalf of the council. All costs associated with the ballot will be paid by the BID.

3.0 Key Issues

- 3.1 Members may be aware that DSD has been working on developing the concept of “Business Improvement Districts” since 2010. This has involved developing a legislative framework for BIDs as well as supporting a “BIDs Academy” for a number of locations that had an interest in exploring the concept of a BID for their respective areas. The academy provided the participating areas with consultancy support to help them develop the concept to the point to which they are ready to go to ballot.
- 3.2 A BID is a business-led initiative in a defined area where businesses decide what additional improvements they want to deliver in that area. The businesses agree on the level of funding required to deliver the projects and services that are *additional* to those already provided by the council or other public or statutory body, and they agree to fund the shortfall through a levy which all businesses in the area are required to pay.
- 3.3 The legislation is now in place to support the implementation of BIDs in Northern Ireland and the first successful ballot took place in Ballymena in March 2015 with a 41% turnout and an 80% yes vote.
- 3.4 Three areas in Belfast were originally part of the BIDs Academy. These were:
- Belfast City Centre (‘Belfast One’) – planned October 2015 ballot
 - Cathedral Quarter (‘Destination CQ’) – planned February 2016 ballot
 - Lisburn Road.
- 3.5 Due to unforeseen circumstances, it would appear that the Lisburn Road BID may not be taken forward at this point. This is principally due to a lack of resources to undertake the necessary preparatory work on the BID.
- 3.6 The Belfast One BID area will cover the majority of the retail core from City Hall northwards towards Gresham Street and bounded by Millfield and Victoria Street. The area comprises just over 1000 properties across 71 streets. The total rateable value for properties within that area is £90million. The BID

development work for this area is being undertaken by Belfast City Centre Management, using a dedicated staff resource that has been supported by resources from Belfast City Council and Department for Social Development (DSD).

- 3.7 The Destination CQ BID area comprises around 600 properties across 80 streets with a combined rateable value of £20million. The development work on this BID is being undertaken by Cathedral Quarter Trust. The Trust did make an application to the council for financial support to employ a dedicated staff resource but this was not successful. Tourism NI has provided some staff and in-kind costs towards the development work, given the tourism-related focus of this BID.
- 3.8 In order for a BID to come into force, the BID ballot must attract:
- A 25% turnout of eligible businesses by number and rateable value
 - A 50% yes vote by both property number and rateable value.
 - The delivery body will be a Company Limited by Guarantee and would be a legal entity. Local Authorities generally appoint a senior officer or councillor to become a Director on the Board so this issue will have to be considered if the BID progresses. In the development phase, both areas have identified “task teams” that will help develop the business plan and work towards the ballot. Details of the representatives from each of the Task Teams are available on mod.gov. It is likely that the Board will look similar to the current task team structure in the event of successful Yes campaigns.
- 3.9 Both areas have developed some preliminary ideas on the specific priorities that they want to progress through the BID-supported activity. For the Belfast One area, the priorities are:
- Marketing and promotion
 - Enhanced service delivery focusing on issues such as safety and security, environment (removal of litter, trade waste etc.), addressing issues such as car parking and signage
 - Business support activities such as centralised procurement of services and utilities and exploring initiatives to address vacancy rates.
- 3.10 The BID for the Cathedral Quarter area is likely to focus on marketing and promotional activity, reflecting the dominance

of the hospitality sector in the area. The BID may also look at developing new products and initiatives to increase footfall in the area.

- 3.11 Based on the preliminary ideas there are opportunities for congruence between the aspirations of the council to develop an attractive, unique and welcoming city centre – as articulated through the City Centre Regeneration Plan – and the work of the Business Improvement Districts. This may present opportunities for collaboration with these new entities in order to progress a range of key initiatives – and to secure additional resources to support this activity. It may also allow the council to think strategically about how it invests in initiatives to support economic regeneration in the city centre, taking account of how its resources can be utilised to pump-prime or complement other investment as part of a wider programme of activity.
- 3.12 Each area will produce a business plan which will be used as the basis of a decision by businesses in the respective areas as to whether or not they wish to vote in favour of the BID. The business plan will be based on an indicative budget that is to be raised from the levy. Currently, both BIDs are looking at a levy of around 1-1.5% of the rateable value of their property. In the case of the Belfast One BID area (and taking account of certain exemptions and existing vacancy levels etc.), this could raise a potential levy of around £1.1million annually. In the case of Cathedral Quarter, it is likely that the BID levy across all properties will raise around £300,000 each year.
- 3.13 Belfast City Council currently owns four properties within the two BIDs areas (excluding car-parks and public spaces). These are City Hall, Digital Services building and Seymour House (all within the Belfast One BID area) and Dunbar Link Yard (located in CQ BID area). While the figures for the council property in the Destination CQ area are not yet available, the likely levy due for the four council properties within the Belfast One BID area will cost around £7,000 per annum. Further consideration needs to be given to the potential levy for DSD transferring property from April 2016 onwards.
- 3.14 BIDs present the council with a number of strategic and operational decisions that may impact on:
- How we engage with city centre businesses and how we collectively resource priority initiatives to promote the city centre

- The mechanisms that we fund to support city centre promotion and business engagement and the level and nature of any future support to these organisations
- How we deal with businesses currently located outside of the BIDs area but still within the city centre core
- How we resource the arms length bodies that operate in the city centre
- How we implement the work on city positioning and how we ensure consistency of message while avoiding duplication of activity.

3.15 In the short-term, the council will be required to vote in the Belfast One BID. The ballot will open in mid-September and close on 30 October, with the decision announced the next day. Given that the council currently has three properties in the Belfast One area, it will be entitled to vote. In respect of the properties within the BID area, it is requested that delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance and Resources to complete and return the voting papers on behalf of the council (the Chief Executive is the Returning Officer for the ballot). Further consideration of the Draft BID Business Plan and impacts on Council, our stakeholders and local businesses is required and a recommendation regarding the Council's vote will be tabled to September Committee with a rationale to support the recommendation.

3.16 According to the legislation, the council is responsible for undertaking the BID ballot. In most cases, the ballot has been commissioned by the local authority but undertaken by a third party organisation. Electoral Reform Services has carried out 99% of the ballots for BIDs – including the Ballymena BID. It is therefore proposed that they are commissioned to carry out the Belfast BID. While the council will commission this service, it will be paid for by the BID.

3.17 In addition to the vote, there are a number of wider issues that will need to be considered by the council with regard to BIDs. These include:

- A baseline service agreement needs established between the council and any BID before a BID's business plan can be created and future performance measured. While both areas have been working directly with frontline services such as street cleansing and waste management, there is a much wider range of services in which the council invests but which are discretionary and subject to annual

- budgets and other financial pressures. These include city animation support – supported through funding for cultural and arts groups – as well as significant investment in city marketing through both Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) and Visit Belfast (VB). The baseline statement is not legally binding: it acts as an indicative commitment by the council (on an annual basis) of what resources it will commit to BID activity
- The Belfast One area covers many but not all of the businesses currently located within the Belfast City Centre Management boundary. The council currently provides core funding to that organisation for delivery of a range of services, as set out in its annual business plan. From next year – subject to the transfer of regeneration powers – the council will also be responsible for the resources currently directed to BCCM by DSD. Consideration will need to be given to the implications for BCCM, given that the BID will now be responsible for many of the services that it currently provides to a significant proportion of city centre businesses. BCCM is currently looking at that issue themselves and a paper on the proposed future operating model will be brought to their board at the end of August 2015
- The legislation also suggests that the council is responsible for collecting the BID levy. Consideration will need to be given to how this can be achieved, given that the other rates income is collected by LPS. In other areas (including Ballymena), this task has been delegated to a third party organisation. The BID will pay for all costs associated with the levy collection. Experience in other locations suggests that the levels of defaults is minimal (less than 10%) but this has not yet been tested in Northern Ireland. The BID can only spend monies that it takes in: if businesses do not pay their contribution, the budget available to the BID is reduced
- The option for the council to be a BID Director: the City Hall is within the BID boundary (as is Seymour House and the Digital Services building). In theory, this could mean that the council could have representation on the BID board and this is the model that other locations have used. Consideration will need to be given to whether this is appropriate and, if so, who the relevant representative should be from the council

- Need to consider potential implications for BCCM and CQT. Currently, BCCM receives £190,000 from the council (and around £170,000 from DSD) while CQT receives no core funding from the council but does received £65,000 per annum from DSD. BCCM is in the process of considering how the organisation should be structured in the future, in the case of a successful BID. CQT is also considering the organisational implications of a BID being introduced, including how this will impact on its activities is supporting the cultural development of that area.
- Given that both BIDs are likely to focus heavily on the need for additional marketing and promotional activities, it will be important for the council to consider what resources it currently provides for this activity – principally channelled through Visit Belfast at present. However, given that this organisation is being asked to align to the tourism strategy approach of increasing overnight stays, it is likely that their marketing activity may change to reflect this. If this is the case, consideration may be given to how more local marketing campaigns are organised and resourced, looking at opportunities for synergy and cost reduction.

3.18 It will take some time to work through the implications of these issues and therefore it is proposed that a future report is brought back to this committee, outlining the proposed approaches for the council.

3.19 Financial implications

The BID ballot for the Belfast One area is likely to cost in the region of £3-£4,000. The Belfast One BID anticipates that it will have an operational budget of around £1,100,000 while the Destination CQ budget from the BID levy should be in the region of £300,000.

3.20 Equality and good relations implications

No specific equality or good relations implications.”

During discussion, the Committee agreed that officers would present maps of the two BID areas within the city centre, drawn to the same scale, to the next Committee meeting.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Retail Action Plan

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the activities delivered through the Retail Action Plan 2014-15, across the city and its arterial routes and neighbourhoods, and to agree the way forward on future support for the sector.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Note the work undertaken through the 2014/15 Retail Action Plan
- Note the review of activities undertaken to inform the future structure of support for retail across the city
- Approve the recommendations to:
 - Continue to deliver a programme of Area Development Support for Business Associations, focusing on marketing and promotional activities, and with an increased focus on considering the sustainability of these local groups
 - Provide support for retail start-ups and existing retail businesses through the mainstream support programmes that are currently being expanded and re-configured, following the transfer of economic development powers as part of local government reform
 - Reconvene the Retail Forum, strengthening engagement with local traders groups and incorporating a wider representation of Council services, aligned to trader needs.

3.0 Key issues

3.1 Members will be aware that the Council – principally through the Economic Development Unit (EDU) – provides a range of support initiatives to encourage business start-up and growth across a number of key sectors. Although retail as a sector has contracted in recent years, it continues to be an

important employer within both large and small business outlets. Local neighbourhood-based retail plays an important role in the fabric of local communities and provides a critical service in these areas.

3.2 As Members may be aware, approval was given at the March 2014 meeting of Development Committee to support the development of the retail sector across the city. Initiatives delivered through the 2014/15 Retail Action Plan included:

- Area Development Support – funding for locally-based business groups to support efforts to increase footfall in the areas
- Start-up and product development support – targeted start-up support for new retail businesses
- Support for the Retail Forum – a grouping of retail support organisations to share information on upcoming events and to plan collaborative activity.

3.3 An evaluation of the activity has now been undertaken by Council staff. An overview of the key activities and their impact is detailed below.

3.4 Area Development Support

Funding was allocated to eight local business groups to increase footfall and sales, enhance the area's profile through branding and 'shop local' initiatives and support the sustainability within groups. In the 2014-15 financial year, funding requested totalled around £79,200, while £67,600 was actually drawn down. In addition four business associations also received resources through Area Working Group funding, with £46,000 allocated from these funds.

3.5 An evaluation of the activities undertaken identified the following key issues:

- Whilst some groups have a strong retail focus, others represent a wider business base and therefore their focus is broader than the economic growth agenda supported by the Economic Development Unit (currently the only source of funding available for this activity)
- The activities undertaken are largely reliant on Council funding: while many now operate a membership fee, the Council funding is required to support the delivery of promotional activities. Despite efforts to encourage self

sustainability, the groups still depend on support from the Council

- Business Associations depend on the efforts of a small number of individual traders whose principal focus is the operation of their own business. They often do not have the necessary skills to undertake required activities or to understand what will work best for their area, and they need significant support from Council staff and other resources in this regard
- Activities delivered are often ad hoc in nature; a more coordinated approach incorporating wider catchment areas of trader groups could help maximise the impact of spend
- Most groups are interested in issues much wider than marketing and promotional activity. These include parking issues, graffiti and street cleansing and commercial waste issues. Consideration should therefore be given to a joined-up approach which integrates support such as physical, environmental and infrastructure improvements. The Area Working Groups could be a useful conduit in channelling resources for this type of activity but the absence of funding for any revenue activity means that this is currently a significant challenge.
- The groups have limited capacity to measure the impact of the activities that they undertake. Likewise, their data gathering is poor and it is difficult for officers to identify whether activities meet the targets set. This means that the groups themselves do not know what works well and what does not and cannot identify what impact specific activities might deliver. The assumption is that much of the activity is undertaken as it can create a “feel good” factor but the actual benefits accrued are often extremely difficult to measure.

3.6 Start up and product development activity

The Retail Start Up Programme supported 20 individuals interested in starting a retail business. Support provided included a variety of skill development workshops, best practice visits, test trading opportunities and product development support. As a result of their engagement in the programme, 14 new retail businesses are now in operation. The new entrepreneurship powers transferred through Local Government Reform mean that the Council now has statutory

responsibility for business start. In that regard, it is proposed that this type of support activity can be delivered through the mainstream support programme that will be put in place post-October 2015.

3.7 Retail Forum

To provide a forum for local traders to engage with the Council, a Retail Forum was established, chaired by the Chair of Development Committee. Three meetings were held in 2014/15 at which trader groups from across the city were invited to participate along with BCCM, NIIRTA and representatives from the Council's Economic Development Unit. Whilst the forum provided a useful mechanism for engagement, and traders suggested that they benefitted from the contact, it was recognised the issues faced by local traders extend beyond economic development functions with issues such as car parking, cleansing, licensing etc all being highlighted. The potential therefore exists to consider how the forum could be extended to include a wider representation of Council services.

3.8 Taking account of the issues outlined above, it is recommended that the following approach is adopted regarding Council support for the current financial year:

3.9 Area-based capacity building and marketing support

Funding awarded to local business groups to date has primarily focused on increasing footfall into the respective catchment areas. This continues to be the main economic priority for the groups. However the recent review has identified that some groups require additional support to build capacity and help them become sustainable entities. Additionally, some groups are investing in marketing and promotional activities without understanding whether or not these will help deliver the anticipated benefits, or whether indeed these are the types of activity that can make a difference to the businesses in their area.

3.10 It is therefore proposed that resources will be set aside to provide guidance around group sustainability and effectiveness of proposed marketing activities. Business groups will be invited to make applications for support and, before activity plans are agreed and letters of offer are issued, support will be provided to test the viability of the proposed programme of promotional activities, explore opportunities for collaboration across a range of groups, agree possible targets and impact measurements and also

look at how the group might continue to operate in a future scenario where there may be less or no funding available.

3.11 It is proposed that funding of up to £3,000 is made available to all groups, with up to a further £2,000 available if the group can provide evidence of £ for £ match funding. This would mean that the maximum Council contribution is £5,000, on condition that the group also makes a financial contribution of £2,000 towards the programme of activities – hence an overall maximum budget of £7,000 per group.

3.12 Mainstreaming support for retail businesses

It is proposed that start up support and business growth support for individual retail businesses will be provided through mainstream programmes provided by the Economic Development Unit. Flexibility within these programmes allows for bespoke specialist sector support. Efforts will also be made to work with colleagues in planning, building control and urban regeneration to look at opportunities for helping retailers to establish in vacant units, and to avail of all relevant exemptions and reliefs.

3.13 Retail Forum

It is proposed to reconvene the Retail Forum, chaired by the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. External stakeholders invited to participate on the forum will include local business associations including current or emerging groups, BCCM and NIIRTA. It is proposed to host up to four meetings of the forum per annum, with a focus on:

- Marketing and promotion: promoting initiatives such as Small Business Saturday, Independents' Day and raising awareness of city events and activities which will bring additional footfall to the city centre and other parts of the city
- Encouraging business networking and collaboration across trader groups to share experience and knowledge or pool resources to achieve cost efficiencies
- Providing a platform for structured engagement between retailers and relevant Council officers to join up business-facing services across the Council including cleansing, urban regeneration, consumer advice, environmental health, planning, community safety and good relations.

3.14 Financial Implications

£60,000 has been set aside within the Economic Development budget for the 2015/16 financial year. The majority of this budget will be utilised to deliver the area development support activity. The Retail Forum will require limited resources to support the hosting of up to four meetings in the year.

3.15 Resources to deliver all other recommended activity will be delivered within existing Economic Development financial and staffing resources.

3.16 Equality and good relations implications

There are no specific equality and good relations implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Student Housing Strategy - Update on the Strategic Study
of the Holyland and Wider University Area**

(Councillor Boyle, who was not a member of the Committee, attended in connection with this item and declared an interest, in that he owned and rented out properties in the Holyland and wider University area.)

The Head of Environmental Health provided the Committee with an update on the Strategic Study of the Holyland and wider university area, and the actions which had been taken since it was adopted by Council on 2nd April 2012. She explained that the recommendations within the study were two-fold, namely to make Belfast a Learning City and a destination of choice for students and to restore the Holyland area of the City, by gradually reintroducing affordable, single household accommodation and improving the quality of the environment.

She explained that an action plan had been developed as the final part of the Study and advised that 60% of those actions had been progressed since the last update in April 2014, while the remaining 40% were ongoing and made up the core work of the partner agencies.

With regards to making Belfast a destination of choice for students, she described how a Framework for Student Housing and Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) document had been completed by the Student Housing Joint Team (DOE, DSD, BCC, NIHE and SIB) and had been launched by the Council in April 2014. She explained that recommendations from this document were now being considered in the context of the Council's new planning powers and Draft City Centre Regeneration and Investment Plan.

The Committee was advised that Queen's University had recently launched a procurement process to secure up to 1200 bed spaces within a mile radius of their Lanyon building. In addition a range of other student housing planning applications from various applicants had been submitted. The challenge for Council, as the planning authority, would be to ensure that PBMSA would be developed in appropriate locations in light of the existing planning policies and plans, the emerging City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy and the statutory requirement to develop a Local Development Plan for Belfast in the coming years. She highlighted to the Members that the Planning and Place Department was developing a more detailed and definitive planning document to ensure the best outcomes for the city, having regard to the recommendations of the Framework for Student Housing and that this would be brought to the Planning Committee in the coming months.

The Head of Environmental Health explained that, with regards to restoring the functional integrity of the Holyland area, the Laganbank Partners and Communities Together (PACT) partnership had been a lead network in developing actions from the 2012 Holyland study. She explained that an Environmental Improvement Scheme had been completed along the Embankment in November 2014, 24 alleygates had been installed across the wider university area and that a number of environmental clean-ups had taken place in the area over the past year.

Councillor Boyle, who attended in connection with this item, declared an interest and he was invited to the table by the Chairperson to make comment. He stated that small decorative improvements to the Holyland area, such as hanging baskets, would be welcomed by landlords and residents alike, as recent improvements had helped to improve the overall character of the area.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Tourism, Events and International Relations

BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards 2015

The Committee paid tribute to the City Events Manager and the City Events team, who had recently been awarded the President's Recognition Award by the Belfast Chamber of Trade & Commerce. The award had been awarded for driving footfall into the City and the Committee noted that this had been the first time it had been awarded to a public sector organisation.

The City Events Manager provided the Committee with an update on the arrangements for the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Awards which would take place in the SSE Arena Belfast on Sunday 20th December 2015. He reminded Members that in October 2014 the Council had endorsed £140,000 worth of Council finances which were to be allocated towards the event as well as in-kind event support via the Council's City Events and Sports Development Unit.

He advised that the awards ceremony would attract an audience of around 7,000 people, with audience members coming from both in and out-of-state locations and that this would represent a major contribution towards the local economy, particularly in the

hospitality trade. He highlighted that the event would also give the city the opportunity to present itself in a very positive light to an audience of over ten million viewers via BBCs various broadcasting channels.

The City Events Manager stated that a number of events would be taking place for young people across the city to create excitement in the lead up to the event.

During discussion, a number of Members stated that they felt it would be important to showcase a number of different venues from all four corners of the city. Further Members requested that officers ascertain whether the new facilities at Girdwood would be completed in time and whether it could be used during the event. The Head of City Events reminded Members that, while the BBC had editorial control of the production, his team would endeavour, insofar as possible, to guide and influence the locations used.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and

- requested that officers ascertain whether the new facilities at Girdwood would be ready in time for the event or at least some related activity;
- agreed that officers should engage with the BBC, where possible, regarding the venues to be used for the various events; and
- agreed that representatives from the BBC would be invited to present to the Committee before the event.

International Linkages Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- **Update Members on a number of planned activities under the council’s International Relations Framework.**
- **Seek approval for the use of resources towards the delivery of the respective events and activities, within the approved Departmental budgets.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- **Consider and agree the council’s engagement in the Sister Cities International Summit in April 2016, up to a value of £10,000, and to host the sister cities of Nashville and Boston as part of this event.**

- Agree council support for the Youth Transformation Project, up to a value of £40,000.
- Agree to support a small dinner reception for the New York City legislators as part of a visit to Belfast in October 2015, at a cost of no more than £3,000, to be hosted by the Chair of City Growth and Regeneration Committee.
- Approve a budget of £10,000 towards travel, accommodation and event hosting costs as part of the January 2016 Tech Mission visit, including attendance by the Lord Mayor and a designated Officer.

3.0 Main report

3.1 International Sister City Event, April 2016

Belfast City Council, along with 62 other Irish and Northern Irish local authorities who have US-based sister city and partnership linkages, have been invited by the cities of Dublin and San Jose to participate in an international summit to take place in Dublin in April 2016. This event will celebrate Northern Ireland / Ireland – US connections, including the role that these relationships have played in supporting sustainable economic growth on the island of Ireland.

- 3.2 The Dublin event will take place over two days, from 22 to 23 April 2016. It is proposed that sister cities in Northern Ireland and Ireland will host their partner cities either before or after these dates. In the case of Belfast, this would involve issuing invitations to the Mayors of Nashville and Boston to attend the Dublin event and to come to Belfast for a series of meetings in advance or after of the Dublin event. Depending on the composition of the in-bound groups, the visit to Belfast will involve a series of one to one meetings with relevant individual groups as well as opportunities to update the delegations on wider corporate and city developments. It will also offer an opportunity to re-focus the individual linkages with Boston and Nashville to ensure maximum benefit.

3.3 Belfast – Boston Youth Transformation Project

As part of the sister city linkage with Boston established in 2014, the theme of youth engagement emerged as a priority for potential collaboration between the cities.

- 3.4 In the course of a number of preliminary visits and engagements between the cities, the North Eastern University (NEU) and the Irish International Immigrants Centre in Boston have proposed to develop a two city Youth Transformation Project.
- 3.5 The overarching aim of the proposed project is to encourage and empower a small group of young, unemployed, men and women from Belfast and Boston to be future leaders in their communities, and to work toward building an inclusive and participatory society in both cities.
- 3.6 Both cities experience disadvantage, intolerance and friction. This project seeks to facilitate integration and transformation: not only of the young participants and how they view themselves in society but also of how systems deal with young people in need.
- 3.7 The target group in mind are those who are not only unemployed but equally have the potential to become change leaders in their community.
- 3.8 The main elements to this project are:
- A reciprocal visit of 7 days duration for 12 young people from each city.
 - Enabling participants to visit key agencies in both cities such as the police, the judicial and justice systems, community leaders, and educational establishments.
 - To document reflections, learning, and develop recommendations and pilot initiatives for consideration by both cities in respect to meeting the needs of young people who experience inequality.
 - Each participant will be expected to present their learning to a group of their peers (no less than ten).
- 3.9 The project has, as its projected timeframe, an outward visit of Belfast young people in October 2015 with an inward visit occurring in February/March 2016. Project findings would be compiled by May 2016. It is anticipated that the overall programme will require a budget of £80,000 with a request from Council for £40,000.
- 3.10 NorthEastern University, in partnership with the Irish International Immigration Centre, are the Boston partners for this initiative and Belfast City Council is currently

undertaking exploratory discussions with local stakeholders including the 174 Trust, Springboard, Probation Board NI, PSNI, Stratagem, Youth Justice Agency and Belfast Metropolitan College to identify young people and become partners.

3.11 Visit by New York legislators

Members will be aware that the second Belfast Homecoming conference will take place in Titanic Belfast from 7 -10 October 2015. The event will attract around 150 key diaspora from the business, legislative and political world to hear about the development and investment opportunities in the city.

3.12 As part of the conference event, a group of 20 New York legislators and 10 prominent New York business and community leaders will visit the city and engage in a range of side meetings with key contacts.

3.13 Given the importance of the legislators group, it is proposed that a small dinner reception is held for the group on the evening of 7 October. This will offer an opportunity to test out some of the preliminary work on the Belfast positioning activity and to promote the key city centre development opportunities. It will also help promote the narrative of Belfast as a city that is open for business and that is already home to a significant and growing stock of US-based investment.

3.14 Tech Mission 2016

Belfast City Council has supported, along with INI and NISP Connect, the two previous Northern Ireland Tech Missions (October 2013 and December 2014) which helped locally based businesses to develop and showcase themselves as part of a Northern Ireland contingent to San Francisco and Palo Alto. Participating businesses have traditionally been aligned to the creative and digital industry sector.

3.15 Tech Mission 2014 identified five new business leads, one new client was secured by a participant business, a collaborative project was developed between a business and US Department of Veterans Affairs and two companies expanded their operations in the US market. A comprehensive civic itinerary was also undertaken by the Lord Mayor who participated in the San Francisco element of the mission which further enhanced Belfast's position in the global marketplace and provided increased learning with

regards to creative hubs, physical regeneration, engagement with NI diaspora, place positioning in the US market and citizen focused initiatives, for example tackling homelessness.

- 3.16 An opportunity exists for Council to support the Tech Mission in 2016, in partnership with Invest NI and NISP CONNECT. The suggested dates for the Tech Mission are 18 – 22 January 2016, with the proposed visit once again including Silicon Valley and San Francisco. The Trade Mission will include representatives from partner organisations and a delegation of up to 20 local tech companies. Businesses selected to participate on the mission will be through a competitive application process. An open call for applications will be issued by Invest NI to all tech companies in Northern Ireland and submissions will be scored by a panel made up of Council, Invest NI and NISP CONNECT. It should be noted that due to the fact Invest NI is assisting with the financial contribution to local companies, this does not guarantee all businesses will be based in Belfast.
- 3.17 The draft elements of the 2016 Tech Mission programme include:
- A 'Creative Belfast' event held in San Francisco on the first day of the mission. This will be the Council's main business event of the mission and will be held in partnership and financially supported by the Northern Ireland Bureau in Washington. The purpose of this event will be to provide participants with an opportunity to pitch and network with investors and companies from the area but will also act as a platform from which to promote Belfast as a world class hub for creativity and innovation.
 - Delivery of a market access programme to participating companies prior to travel, to help identify key business contacts and opportunities on the west coast. Access to this support will also be available to other Belfast based creative digital businesses not participating on the 2016 mission, to help prepare them for potential attendance and future trade missions.
 - Opportunities for businesses to participate in a number of showcase events and a series of one to one meetings with potential clients based in the United States.
- 3.18 As with the 2014 Tech Mission, it is recommended that the Lord Mayor of Belfast help lead the mission by hosting

pitching and networking events for the delegation, accompanied by one member of staff. In addition, a civic programme will be developed and aligned to researching business incubation centres (Greenstart, Sandbox Suites and Matter Incubator), business development programmes (San Francisco Small Business Development Centre), Green/Clean Tech business growth initiatives and employability and skills programmes (San Francisco Platform to Employment P2E).

3.19 Financial and Resource Implications

It is estimated the Council participation will incur the following budgetary costs:

- Boston – Belfast Youth Transformation Project - £40,000.
- Sister Cities International Summit and programme - £10,000.
- Visit by New York legislators – Welcome reception - £3,000.
- Tech Mission - £10,000 (travel, accommodation and event hosting). The mission has secured \$10,000 financial commitment from The Northern Ireland Bureau in Washington to support the delivery of the ‘Creative Belfast’ event. Invest NI have agreed to support up to 50% of travel and accommodation costs for the participating businesses and the delivery costs associated with the market access programme.

3.20 Equality and Good Relations Implications

No specific equality or good relations implications.”

During discussion, the Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development explained that a dinner would no longer be required for the New York City legislators and that, instead, a drinks reception, at a cost of no more than £500, had been suggested.

A number of Members raised concerns with the Belfast – Boston Youth Transformation Project and the Committee agreed that a more detailed report on this Project should be submitted to September’s meeting.

The Committee, therefore,

- agreed the council's engagement in the Sister Cities International Summit in April 2016, up to a value of £10,000, and to host the sister cities of Nashville and Boston as part of this event;
- agreed to support a small drinks reception for the New York City legislators as part of a visit to Belfast in October 2015, at a cost of no more than £500, to be hosted by the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee; and
- approved a budget of £10,000 towards travel, accommodation and event hosting costs as part of the January 2016 Tech Mission visit, including attendance by the Lord Mayor and a designated Officer.

Proposals for Visual Arts Capital Infrastructure - Update

The Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development outlined to Members a number of proposals which had emerged in recent months in relation to the development of visual arts capital infrastructure in the City.

She reminded Members that there had been references to a major city centre museum or gallery in both the Council's City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan, both of which referred to making use of Belfast's built heritage. Similarly, the Integrated Tourism Strategy for Belfast 2015-2020 had identified the theme of Contemporary Art and Design and had pointed to the need for a city centre-based attraction of international quality.

She pointed out that a number of organisations and partnerships had been working on proposals, in parallel, to develop a range of visual arts infrastructure proposals and that the majority of the organisations involved had engaged with the Council as consultees, some of which would also be potential funders. Members were advised that a Visual Arts Hub and a Regional Art Gallery had now completed economic appraisals, but that a number of other proposals were at various stages of development. She advised the Committee that agreed objectives would be reflected in the new Cultural Framework Action Plan 2016-2020.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Dudgeon,
Seconded by Alderman McGimpsey and

Resolved - That the Council convene a meeting of interested key parties to discuss the way forward for the major city centre art gallery/museum project in our Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan, with a view to setting up an ad hoc advisory group.

The Committee noted the various proposed projects and their respective stages of progress and agreed that officers should continue to engage with key stakeholders and provide further updates to the Council as required, with a focus on how they aligned with a number of wider strategic objectives to support city centre regeneration, cultural development and tourism growth in the city.

Cultural Framework for Belfast - Progress Report

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

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to give an update on progress on the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012 to 2015 and seek permission to develop a new Action Plan for implementation from 2016 to 2020. Approval is also being requested to open the core multi-annual funding programme for arts and heritage organisations.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- **Note the contents of this report and agree to the development of a new action plan for 2016 to 2020 to support the Cultural Framework for Belfast**
- **Agree to open Core multi-annual funding for arts and heritage organisations 2016 to 2020 in September 2015.**

3.0 Key issues

3.1 Cultural Framework for Belfast

At the September 2012 meeting of the Development Committee, the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012-2015 was agreed. A significant programme of public engagement and consultation was carried out in the development of the framework. While the activities agreed covered a three year work programme, the framework established a longer-term vision to 2020 that was:

‘Everyone in Belfast experiences and is inspired by our city’s diverse and distinctive culture and arts. Arts and heritage are valued for enriching quality of life and creating wealth, and the city’s culture and creativity is renowned throughout the world.’

3.2 The vision was supported by four strategic themes, namely:

1. Distinctly Belfast

2. Inspiring communities
3. Attracting Audiences
4. Strengthening the sector.

3.3 The Framework recognised that culture and arts make a vital contribution to the city, helping to improve quality of life, driving the economy and making Belfast a shared and welcoming city.

3.4 Since the introduction of the framework, the council has invested significant resources in a range of arts and heritage organisations through its various funding mechanisms. Funding schemes total an annual investment of £1.83million in the sector. This represents an increase of 25% on the budget available in the year before the introduction of the new framework. Council budgets have remained constant during this period while other funding partners have reduced their budgets significantly over the period.

3.5 The breakdown of the direct investment package for the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012 to 2015 has included:

- £4.1m in 52 arts and heritage organisations through core multi annual funding
- £176,000 through PEACE III in 11 community arts Creative Legacies projects
- £180,000 invested in 12 large festivals through the PEACE III City of Festivals Programme
- £480,000 in over 100 arts and heritage projects
- Supporting nearly 100 community festivals in partnership with Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, with funding of over £400,000
- Developing a new fund, Creative and Cultural Belfast, worth £900,000 in partnership with Arts Council of Northern Ireland. This has resulted in 7 large scale Creative Belfast projects.

3.6 Other Cultural Framework achievements to date include:

- Developing an Outcomes Framework called 'Art Affects', to identify, measure and evaluate the impact arts has on the city. Over 125 people from 80 organisations were involved in the development of this framework and will

link into the implementation to help develop better measurements around the impact of cultural investment

- Developing our European links and hosting the Eurocities Culture Forum in 2014, with 72 delegates attending, from 54 European cities
- Supporting the visual arts, festivals and heritage sectors through forums and action plans
- Creating the business support and development programme, 'Strengthening the Sector' which helps to develop the cultural sector and includes mentoring and training
- New partnerships with Audiences NI, Community Arts Partnership and Voluntary Arts Ireland were developed to provide support across the sector
- Supporting the music sector through Belfast Music Week; Output, a music industry conference; and Inside Out, outdoor music performances
- Developing international reputation with events such as the From Belfast to Bolshoi exhibition
- Supporting the 400th anniversary celebrations of Belfast being given a town charter.

3.7 A full evaluation of the current, three year action plan will be completed at the end of this year. In anticipation of this work, and building on the achievements and lessons learned from activities undertaken to date, Members are asked to approve the development of a new action plan for the period 2016 to 2020 in line with the long term vision of the framework and the four strategic themes identified.

3.8 The process for developing this new Action Plan 2016 to 2020 will include:

- Review of current Action Plan (2012 to 2015)
- Focused consultations with key partners and interested organisations on the following areas of work:
 - Funding: reviewing current funding
 - Place and heritage: place making and engagement with Belfast's heritage

- **People:** developing, supporting and retaining talent
- **Communities:** building capacity among local communities
- **Global connections:** role of culture in international branding of Belfast
- **Audiences:** increasing engagement of audiences with culture, arts and heritage
- **Events:** supporting the delivery of events and festivals.

3.9 A draft action plan will be presented to this committee in November 2015 and, subject to endorsement, the plan will be issued for a full public consultation. On completion of the consultation phase, a revised draft of the Action Plan will then be presented to the committee for final approval, by March 2016.

3.10 Core multi annual funding programme

One of the targets of the Cultural Framework was to streamline and simplify our funding processes by December 2012. In April 2013, core multi-annual funding (CMAF) replaced the previous Annual Funding and Multi-annual Funding programmes.

3.11 The purpose of the new core multi-annual funding was to support core costs and associated programme costs, offering longer term sustainability for Belfast-based arts or heritage organisations that have full time staff and ongoing annual costs, and that produce work which substantially benefits the city.

3.12 Organisations were invited to show how their planned programme for 2013 to 2016 was aligned to the themes of the Cultural Framework, of which the theme of 'Distinctly Belfast' was central.

3.13 Assessments were made only on the basis of information supplied by the applicant within their submission. This included the application form, programme of activities and supporting documentation such as business plans and strategies. Assessors considered the strategic fit of the proposed programme against the framework. Sixty five applications were assessed with 52 organisations receiving

core funding totalling £1,372,830. The total request for funding was £2,345,231 which was substantially more than the budget available. A list of organisations receiving funding in the period 2013-16 is available on mod.gov.

3.14 In the period to date, core funded organisations have provided an extensive programme of activities in Belfast with many exceeding their projected targets. These include an annual average of:

- 4,735,867 audience numbers
- 204,352 participants
- 18,863 individual artist contracts
- 86,203 volunteer hours.

A full summary of programme outputs is available on mod.gov.

3.15 In light of the positive evaluation statistics emerging from the first two years of CMAF, it is proposed that a new core funding programme is opened for the period 2016-2020. This longer funding period will align with the end of the new Cultural Action Plan, the overall Cultural Framework and the timescale for the Integrated Tourism Framework. Funding will be subject to budget being available annually.

3.16 As the vision of the framework and the four key themes were to remain intact until 2020, it is proposed that the assessment criteria for core multi-annual funding should remain largely unchanged. The criteria for the period 2013-16 are available on mod.gov.

3.17 In recognition of the fact that the council boundary for Belfast changed in April 2015 and that this core funding programme is an open and competitive process, there will be an extensive programme of engagement and promotion in order to ensure that all eligible organisations have an equal opportunity to apply. This will include:

- Public advertisements via newspapers and websites
- Email notifications
- General Information Sessions
- An offer of one to one advice session to any potential applicant with a Tourism, Culture, Arts and Heritage officer.

3.18 It is hoped that the council will be able to maintain and potentially increase the level of funding available through this programme. In the period to date, organisations have successfully generated 45% of their income from non-grant sources making a vital contribution to Belfast's economy. On average the core grant received from Belfast City Council amounted to 4% of an organisation's turnover. This means that it is critical that the Council works with other funding partners to identify the optimal support mechanisms and approaches for the sector in order to maintain the positive benefits that can be accrued from investment in the arts.

3.19 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no direct financial resource implications at this time. The recommendations for funding will be presented to Committee for approval in January 2016 and will be subject to agreed budgets for subsequent years.

3.20 Equality or Good Relations Implications

The current Cultural Framework and Action Plan have been subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment. A further Equality Screening will be carried out on the new Action Plan."

In response to a Members question, it was agreed that a breakdown of the core grants that each organisation had received under the Council's Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012-2015 be submitted to the next meeting.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Quarter One Finance Report

(Mr. M. McBride, Head of Finance and Performance attended in connection with this item.)

The Head of Finance and Performance reported that the Quarter 1 position for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee was an over-spend of £219,000 (6.0%), with the forecast year end position being an over-spend of £371,000 (2.3%). He explained that the Committee current and forecast overspend positions were due to two specific service areas, namely, City Events and Venues and The Belfast Zoological Gardens.

He explained that the City Events and Venues Service had reported a Quarter 1 over-spend of £93,000 and a forecast year end overspend of £260,000 and that the key reasons for this position were the loss of income above that which was planned for and

the failure to reduce expenditure impacted by the loss of income. The Committee was advised that the Zoo had a net overspend of £206,000 at the end of Quarter 1, with a forecast year end overspend of £200,000. He reported that the forecast position was due to an anticipated loss of income of £100,000 and additional expenditure, including employee costs.

During discussion, a number of Members highlighted that the Zoo was a regional facility and that the Council should not be the sole funder of such a facility.

The Committee agreed to request that the Development and the Parks and Leisure Departments investigate the forecasted overspends and that a report be submitted to the September meeting of the Committee outlining the corrective actions which would be undertaken to address the forecast overspend during the year.

Taste of Northern Ireland Festival

The Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development advised the Committee that an application had been received for the "Taste of Northern Ireland Festival" to be held in the Custom House Square, Belfast on 18th, 19th and 20th September 2015. She advised that this would be the fifth year that the event had taken place in Belfast and that it was designed to showcase the range of food and drinks produced in Northern Ireland. She explained that the event was being organised by Denvir Marketing on behalf of Tesco, where some stall holders would have products for sale, however most would offer free samples and use the event as an opportunity to demonstrate their product range. The Committee was reminded that anyone who wished to operate a market or car boot sale within Belfast must apply to the Council for a licence and that the organisers had supplied all relevant documentation for this event. She advised also that officers from the Markets Development Unit had engaged with the relevant officers across the Council in order to check and verify the documentation and that checks would also be carried out during the event, in line with the Markets Rights Policy guidelines.

The Committee agreed to grant the licence for the Taste of Northern Ireland festival at Custom House Square on 18th, 19th and 20th September 2015.

Folktown Market

The Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development advised that a request had been received from "Folktown CIC" to waive stallage fees at the Folktown Market which took place on Thursdays in Bank Square.

She explained that clarification had been provided on the Markets Rights Policy at the 17th February 2015 meeting of the Development Committee. The Policy, which had been in force since June 2012, had set in place a framework which allowed the Council to utilise its historic rights to hold markets and to extend these rights to third party organisations in order to operate independent markets. She explained that the policy had set out the various types of markets, the relevant conditions and the fees applicable to each. Members were reminded that there were two elements to the market licence fee, namely a one-off licence fee and a fee per stall for each market day.

The policy had indicated that, in some instances, both fees could be waived for any market which was run “for solely charitable purposes” and, working in conjunction with the Legal Services team, a number of clarifications had been provided which were endorsed by the Development Committee and ratified by Council at its meeting on 2nd March 2015.

The Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development advised the Committee that, as a result of the above mentioned clarifications, Community Interest Companies (CICs), such as Folktown, did not meet the criteria set out in the policy in respect of events run for “solely charitable purposes” and, as such, that full stallage fees should still be paid. They did, however, benefit from a discounted licence fee (50% of fee payable).

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Ó Donnghaile

That the Committee agrees to accede to the request by Folktown CIC and to waive the stallage fees for Folktown Market Traders for a three year period.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Attwood,
Seconded by Councillor Dudgeon

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the request by Folktown CIC, pending a meeting with the group to ascertain if the Council could provide alternative support to the organisation, on the understanding that a report would be brought back in due course.

On a vote by show of hands nine Members voted for the amendment and six against and it was declared carried. Accordingly, the amendment was put to the Committee as the substantive motion and passed.

Operational Issues

Proposal for an Ideas Factory Pilot Project

This Item was restricted by virtue of paragraph(s) 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

(Mr. B. Johnston, Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts Manager attended in connection with this item.)

The Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development sought the Committees approval to commit resources to support the development and delivery of a

project as part of an initiative identified in the Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020, namely, an “Ideas Factory”.

She explained that the establishment of an Ideas Factory would take a significant lead in time and would not be fully functional and operational until the next financial year when appropriate resources would need to be allocated. She advised that to spearhead and inform the work of the Ideas Factory it was recommended that a pilot project would be delivered in the current financial year contributing to Year 1 targets of the Integrated Tourism Strategy and providing robust data to inform future projects.

The Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts Manager advised that, in response to the recommendation for an Ideas Factory, a proposal had been received from T13, an organisation which was based in the Titanic Quarter and had been instrumental in a range of urban activities, experiences and animation projects which had attracted international acclaim. He explained that T13 had designed a year 1 pilot project, “Contained”, which would take place from September 2015 to December 2015 to animate Belfast and had been inspired by best practice in urban animation from other UK and European cities.

He explained that the approach would take the concept of pop up or temporary spaces as a key regeneration driver, drawing on the distinct character of the city and creating a unique experience that appealed to the tourism market as well as local audiences. He advised that the Belfast project would utilise shipping containers to create innovative urban spaces, helping to connect the city centre to the river and the Titanic Quarter.

He advised that the total cost of the project would be £260,000, with T13 committed to investing in the infrastructure and capital costs of “Contained”, as well as delivering all PR and marketing functions in partnership with the city’s key marketing agencies. He advised Members that the amount required from Council would be £60,000 over three months, which would be attributed to Marketing, Programming and Production and that it would be allocated from within the Tourism, Culture and Arts 2015/16 budget.

The Committee agreed that T13 would deliver a three month pilot project called Contained, as part of the Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy’s Ideas Factory, and approved a contribution of £60,000 to T13 which would be allocated from the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit’s 2015-16 budget.

Notice of Motion: Family Friendly City Centre

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 consider and agree the next steps for the notice of motion on ‘family friendly city centre’ from 03 March 15 Shadow Council:**

'This Council notes that city centres which are child and family friendly bring a wide range of benefits including,

- **contributing to healthy childhood development;**
- **driving economic regeneration as families spend more time in the City; and**
- **making city centre living a more viable option for families, and thereby contributing to longer-term social regeneration.**

The Council commends the work of the Belfast Healthy Cities (BHC) organisation which has been researching and testing child friendly places since 2011, including the provision of temporary "Kids Spaces" in the city centre. The Council agrees to harness its new planning, community planning and economic regeneration powers to develop a world class family friendly strategy for Belfast, including the development of 'Kids Spaces' in the City centre.'

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended in support of the original motion:

- **A recognition letter is sent to BHC seeking their ongoing commitment to work in partnership with Council and others in this area.**
- **Officers review the details of all activities and resources to present a full and final list of current council programmes and investments with key partners like BSP which supports the benefits outlined in the motion. This will identify opportunities, better join up existing programmes and consider how best to assign resources for the greatest measurable benefit for both CYP and city outcomes.**
- **Moving forward, the benefits from specific activity around child, family and age friendly initiatives are incorporated into Council's ambition for everyone to benefit from city regeneration and investment.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

Council has a positive track record of support and investment through both core services and partnership work on which to harness the new planning and anticipated regeneration powers to promote the benefits of a child and family friendly city (centre) particularly with its ongoing commitment to be a designated healthy city as part of the World Health Organisation's European Health Network. Belfast is a member of the Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities. As part of this commitment Council, in partnership with Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) and the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP), lead and drive the Age-friendly Belfast Plan 2014-2017 as a member of the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities. BHC are also a member of both BSP and HASP.

- 3.2** For over ten years, delivery of the best outcomes for children and young people has been a priority for Members who have endorsed a vision for Belfast's Children and Young People to 'reach their potential and to recognise that Belfast is the place to be to do just that.' A progress report on CYP outcomes approach will be presented to the People and Communities Committee September 15.
- 3.3** Working in partnership at regional, city and at a local level there are a range of stakeholders involved in supporting children and young people, older citizens and city regeneration. Most notably the council and the Public Health Agency commits funding to the BSP and Belfast Healthy Cities to progress a range of child friendly, family friendly and age friendly initiatives. There are also high levels of project level activity, resources and emerging opportunities detailed on mod.gov. This activity will benefit from one focused approach within the context of the developing Belfast agenda.
- 3.4** In our recent response to BHC 'Shaping healthier places for children – a call to action' in June 15, council reinforced our commitment, leadership, policy direction and action along with a desire for collaboration among all partners who have a role to play in shaping an all age friendly city.
- 3.5** As the Belfast Conversation develops, and with the new planning powers bedding in, there is a general consensus the city centre regeneration and investment plan will be a

catalyst for a dedicated focus on the benefits derived from child, family and age friendly initiatives - in short, an all ages friendly approach. Moving forward a dedicated 'PLACE & SPACE' outcomes workshop may support the development of these benefits for everyone in the city – CYP, older people, and families alike as we rationalise the priority actions falling under city centre regeneration and investment as part of the Belfast agenda.

3.6 As part of the implementation of the City Centre Plan, a detailed report will be brought back with proposals for more city centre play areas and activities.

3.7 Next Steps

Focused approach

The appendix highlights the volume of activity currently underway to support a child and family friendly city but recognises the potential for collaborative planning and delivery to achieve better results. The City Centre regeneration strategy, supported by the CYP outcomes framework, provides the focus to prioritise what services are needed to get the greatest benefit for the child, young person or family. Each of these distinct programmes of work can incorporate the key messages in the notice of motion.

3.8 Stakeholders

The City Centre Regeneration and Investment plan offers a timely opportunity to engage the relevant stakeholders via a dedicated outcomes workshop to agree priorities in a way which supports collaborative effort and to focus clearly where services need to go and how they are best delivered.

3.9 Organisational expertise

As part of the culture change, there is opportunity to better harness the existing expertise within the organisation to influence new ways of working. For example, the Play team designed and delivered the 'Come and Play' initiative to enable children to play outdoors. Their knowledge and experience on the principles of play can shape future physical play provision in new and regenerated capital build schemes to provide safe play space rather than always rely upon fixed play equipment to provide a play opportunity in the city and neighbourhoods.

3.10 Finance and Resource Implications

Financial

Costs associated with outcomes workshop will be resourced from within existing revenue budgets.

Human Resources

From within existing staff teams where relevant sections will contribute officer time for the task and finish work around any audit. CYP manager can co-ordinate the task and finish group.

Asset and Other Implications

Not applicable

Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or good relations implications.”

During discussion, the Committee agreed that proposals for immediate improvements of family friendly spaces and programmes be brought back to the Committee at a future date.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Consultation Responses

DETI - Review of Tourism Accommodation Policy 2015-2020

The Committee considered the undernoted report and the draft response to the consultation on the review of tourism accommodation policy for the period 2015-2020:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present a draft response to a DETI consultation on the review of tourism accommodation policy for the period 2015-2020. The review considers the existing accommodation provision and considers the potential future demands in light of projected growth. A copy of the consultation is available on mod.gov.**
- 1.2 The consultation closed at the end of July. In order to meet the consultation timeframes, a draft response was submitted and is available on mod.gov. However, officers confirmed that this response should be considered a draft and that it would have to be endorsed by elected members in August.**

DETI provided a template for all responses so the council response follows this template.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to approve the draft response to the consultation, as set out on mod.gov.

3.0 Main report

3.1 The consultation document highlights the importance of tourism to the region. It estimates that tourism supports 43,000 jobs and contributes 5.2% of the GDP. The Programme for Government sets targets to increase tourism to 4.5 million overnight visitors and tourism spend to £1 billion by 2020. To meet these targets, it will be necessary to provide suitable accommodation.

3.2 Members will be aware that the Integrated Tourism Strategy for Belfast has a number of challenging targets in terms of visitor numbers and economic return. The strategy proposes to double the value of tourism by 2020 to £870million annually.

3.3 The review reveals that the main shortfall is in the supply of 4/5 star accommodation, and that Belfast in particular, may be approaching an undersupply in these categories. This issue will become more urgent as the opening date for the Waterfront Conference and Exhibition Centre draws closer and the demand for midweek business tourism grows. This echoes research that has recently been undertaken by Visit Belfast and, on this basis, there has been some early engagement with lending institutions, hoteliers and developers to see what can be done to address this situation. In addition, since this engagement, a number of hotel applications have been submitted to the planning service.

3.4 One of the key proposals of significance to Belfast in the draft policy document is the proposed end to the moratorium on funding for capital investment in accommodation in Belfast. It is proposed that a Tourist Accommodation Loan Fund will be developed for hotel and larger-scale accommodation projects in the Belfast area until 2020. Funding will be available for a limited range of developments including:

- New Build: four star and five star hotel developments**
- Expansion projects: four star and five star hotel expansion projects**

- **Market repositioning: upgrades where, on completion, the hotel will be at least four star.**

3.5 The draft policy suggests that local authorities will have a significant role to play in helping articulate the demand for tourism accommodation within their respective areas, working in conjunction with Tourism NI and Invest NI.

3.6 It also touches on the need to look at how flexible solutions such as pop-up hotels can be used to accommodate large spikes in demand, for example if there is a major event in the city. Finally, it proposes a revision of the current certification for accommodation categories to allow for additional flexibility, with the emergence of new types of accommodation solutions.

3.7 Financial & Resource Implications

No specific financial or resource implications.

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications

No specific equality or good relations implications.”

The Committee approved the draft consultation response.

Chairperson