

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 10th February, 2016

## MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

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

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;  
Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and  
Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. L. Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and  
International Development; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors McDonough-Brown and Lyons.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 13th January 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 February.

### **Declarations of Interest**

In respect of Item 5a on the agenda, viz., European Social Fund, Councillor Graham declared an interest in that she was employed by a company which was in receipt of funding through that fund.

### **Request to present to Committee - Visit Belfast**

The Committee acceded to a request from Visit Belfast to present at its next meeting.

### **Matters Referred Back from Council**

#### **Notice of Motion - Bus Lanes**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st February, had referred the undernoted Notice of Motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Boyle and seconded by the High Sheriff, Alderman Rodgers, to the Committee for consideration in accordance with Standing Orders:

“This Council requests that the Minister for Regional Development and the senior management team of Transport NI come before the Council’s City Growth and Regeneration Committee to hear concerns from Councillors about the impact that bus lanes and bus lane cameras are having on motorists, commuters and local businesses, with a view to devising solutions which will make Belfast City Centre an easier place in which to live, relax and work.”

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Stalford,  
Seconded by Alderman McGimpsey and

Resolved - That this Council, as a matter of policy going forward, will regularly meet the senior managers of Transport NI to discuss the impact of government policy on the transport infrastructure of Belfast city centre with a view to making it an easier place to work, shop, visit, live and enjoy leisure.

### **Presentations**

#### **Libraries NI**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Ms. Mandy Bryson, Assistant Director, and Mr. Desi Miskelly, Assets Manager, from Libraries NI were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Miskelly presented an overview of current library facilities which were available throughout the city and highlighted those which had undergone refurbishment since 2009. He explained the history of the Belfast Central Library and outlined its many resources, which included a large newspaper archive, public computers and free wifi. The Committee was advised that the Belfast Central Library buildings had had a number of improvement works carried out over the past decade but that much of it remained inaccessible to the public.

Mr. Miskelly advised the Members that Libraries NI wished to establish a central library which balanced the need for archive facilities and the ambition to create an accessible and attractive public library. He therefore advised that Libraries NI had developed proposals to restore the original Victorian library building and address the inefficiencies, creating over 9500m<sup>2</sup> of library space where over 80% would be open to

the public. Ms. Bryson advised that they wanted to create a public space where people could research, learn, discover and socialise and explained that they had looked at a number of good practice examples in countries from around the world at how to incorporate all of those. She advised the Members that the business case had been submitted to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) in November, 2015, which proposed redevelopment on the current site at a cost of £32.5 million, and on which they were awaiting approval.

During discussion, the representatives from Libraries NI answered a number of Members' questions regarding future proofing of the library, the impact that modern technology had had on library usage, the impact that the upcoming influx of students would have on the area and the potential to work with the Council to ensure integration with the City Centre Plan and other developments in the area.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives from Libraries NI for their presentation and they left the meeting.

### **AECOM - Car Parking strategy**

The Chairperson reminded the Members that the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy had identified car parking as a major issue for Belfast city centre and that the Council had been working with the Department for Regional Development (DRD) to develop and implement a strategy for car parking for the city. The Council had commissioned consultants, AECOM, in October 2015 to develop a Car Parking Strategy and a project steering group consisting of Council officers and representatives from DRD had been set up to assist AECOM with the development of the Strategy.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Mr. Peter Morrow and Mr. Tim Robinson from AECOM were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting. Mr. Robinson outlined the progress of the strategy to the Members, particularly the baseline research, the emerging issues and the outcomes from consultation with key stakeholders.

Mr. Robinson highlighted to the Committee that there were a number of large transport schemes potentially coming forward within the city, including the York Street Interchange and the Belfast Transport Hub, as well as regeneration masterplans such as Ulster University's Belfast campus, the Linen Quarter and Northside. He advised the Members that those schemes would impact on parking and would therefore be considered within the development of the strategy.

During discussion, the Committee was advised that there were 40,000 car parking spaces within the city and that the Council now controlled just 6% of these. Mr. Robinson also outlined that, in terms of how parking influenced town centre attractiveness, studies noted that location was the number one factor for customers and that parking costs were less important.

A number of Members made the point that people should be encouraged to come into the city centre by any mode of transport that they chose and that the Council should be careful not to actively deter those in cars from the city. A further number of

Members expressed their ambition to further explore how Residents' Parking Schemes might operate in neighbourhoods adjoining the city centre, while a Member asked AECOM to hold a one-off session with those communities which bounded the city centre in relation to issues such as commuter parking.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the findings presented by AECOM on the emerging Car Parking Strategy;
2. noted that officers were aiming to have a draft strategy published for public consultation by May 2016;
3. noted that party briefings would be available for those who wished to avail of them; and
4. agreed that a one-off workshop would be held with AECOM and the inner-city communities which bordered the city centre, in order to discuss the issues which they faced, such as commuter parking.

#### **Attendance at Events**

##### **Sister Cities Summit Dublin 2016**

The Committee was advised that the Council, along with 62 other Irish and Northern Irish local authorities who had US-based linkages, had been invited by the cities of Dublin and San Jose to participate in an international summit which would take place in Dublin, from 21st to 22nd April, 2016. The Members were informed that an event would celebrate Northern Ireland/Ireland – US connections, including the role that those relationships had played in supporting sustainable economic growth on the island of Ireland.

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 12th August 2015, it had agreed to invite the Mayors of Nashville and Boston to attend the Dublin event and to come to Belfast for a series of meetings on 19th and 20th April, in advance of the Summit. She confirmed that both cities had confirmed their attendance and were in the process of recruiting respective delegations.

The Committee agreed:

1. that the Council would participate in the Sister Cities International Summit in Dublin 21-22 April 2016; and
2. that the Council would be represented by the Lord Mayor, the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, or their nominees, and representatives from each of the remaining parties, along with the Chief Executive, the Director of Development and an Officer from the EU and International Relations Unit.

## Operational

### European Social Fund

Councillor Graham declared an interest in Item 5(a), viz., “European Social Fund” in so far as her employer was in receipt of funding from the fund and she left the room while the item was under discussion.

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on progress of the European Social Fund (ESF) projects that Belfast City Council agreed to match fund in Year One and to propose the continuation of match funding for the projects for Year Two, in line with Year One commitments and subject to approval of expenditure by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL).**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Agree to match funding provision for Year Two of the projects at the levels provided for Year One activity.**
- **Note and agree the proposals to engage with the ESF projects to identify opportunities for collaboration and added value.**

#### **3.0 Main report**

##### **3.1 Background to Employability and Skills**

**Employability and Skills forms an integral part of the Belfast Agenda with key priorities around jobs, skills and addressing educational inequalities. Belfast City Council commissioned an Employability and Skills Framework, which identifies how the education and skills challenges articulated through the Belfast Agenda might be addressed in a way that can support more inclusive economic growth in the City of Belfast.**

**3.2 The draft Employability and Skills Framework identifies several key challenges including high levels of economic inactivity, significant gaps in qualifications and skills, disparities in educational attainment and low levels of entrepreneurship. The ESF projects form a key contribution**

to developing the skills levels of those furthest from the labour market.

- 3.3 The Draft Employability and Skills Framework is being updated to incorporate amendments arising from the consultation process. In tandem with this, officers are preparing an implementation plan linking Employability and Skills with the Council's ambitions to support social value and address poverty. The plan will be developed with input from Corporate HR and Economic Development, taking into account the existing employability work of the Council. It will also identify how future resources could be best utilised to add value, whilst working in partnership with key stakeholders. An outline of this implementation plan and final Employability and Skills Framework document will be tabled to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for endorsement.

3.4 European Social Fund

As Members will be aware, the European Social Fund (ESF), managed by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), aims to reduce economic inactivity and increase workforce skills primarily targeting those furthest removed from the labour market. Interventions supported through ESF are varied in terms of their target market and mechanisms of support. In practice, however, this includes job clinics, legal and debt advice as well as work placements, into work support and training up to Level One (equivalent to GCSE grades D-G). The outcomes of ESF projects are geared towards progression into employment, self-employment and/or further training.

- 3.5 At the 19 June 2015 meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, Members agreed to provide match funding for six organisations delivering ESF projects and one non-ESF education and training programme (see table in 3.7). At that meeting, members also agreed in principle support for these projects in years 2 and 3, subject to available resources and satisfactory performance.
- 3.6 In addition to providing match funding for the ESF activity, the Council has included within our funding agreements with relevant projects a condition requiring organisations to provide a referral/brokerage system to help contractors to meet their social clause obligations under our contracts. This has improved communications between contractors and training providers. Corporate HR has also worked closely with the organisations to facilitate work placements and

requests to participate in pre-recruitment programmes for business clerks and providing opportunities at the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall. Corporate HR have also worked with Economic Development to provide information sessions, facilitate placement opportunities and provide site visits to Council facilities.

**3.7 An overview of Year One costs and targets is set out below:**

Organisation	Total Project Costs Year One (as per letter of offer)	ESF/DEL/Other Match Funding	BCC Match Funding	Target Participant Numbers (Year 1)	Target into employment (Year 1)
LEMIS Partnership	£2,684,736	£2,604,736	£80,000	2,000	400
Springboard	£251,639	£216,639	£35,000	131	30
Shankill Women's Centre	£237,570	£212,570	£25,000	150	30
Women's TEC	£220,572	£185,572	£35,000	140	8
Workforce	£185,463	£160,463	£25,000	105	16
Women in Business	£112,500	£97,500	£15,000	200	12
Lenadoon (Non-ESF)	£62,510	£37,510 (Non-ESF)	£25,000	250	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£3,754,990</b>	<b>£3,514,990</b>	<b>£240,000</b>	<b>2,976</b>	<b>521</b>

**3.8 A full breakdown of the organisations' progress and spend can be found on modern.gov.**

**3.9 By match-funding these projects, the Council is helping to support a projected 521 residents into employment, 54 into self-employment, 235 into Further Education and supporting the achievement of 1476 qualifications.**

**3.10 Progress on the projects has varied, with some forecast to exceed their targets for participants entering employment and further education. Other projects, however, are unlikely to meet their targets, or may be underspent by the end of Year One, as a result of a number of challenges affecting delivery. Many of these were beyond the control of the project promoters. They include:**

- Delays to the commencement of projects due to inability of project promoters to tie down match funding required.
- Delays in production of Letters of Offer and operational guidelines by DEL meaning that projects were unable to recruit staff and mobilise for delivery.

- Introduction of a new referral system from Jobs and Benefits offices to ESF projects which took some time to resolve, impacting on the volume of clients.
- 3.11 One of the key outcomes for ESF is progression to Further Education (FE) training, whose traditional intake period for new students is September. Delays to the ESF projects have impacted on delivery of this target, as some participants have missed the intake deadline.
- 3.12 The projects are also restricted by DEL to providing Level 1 qualifications, which do not always meet client needs and are not sufficient in many cases for gaining employment. Both the Council and the project promoters are continuing to raise this issue with DEL.
- 3.13 The ESF Projects are currently awaiting confirmation from DEL of their funding for Year Two of their projects. Once DEL provide this detail, the projects also need to confirm if they have the necessary match funding in place. If projects do not secure all of the match funding needed they may have to scale back activity or, in the worst case scenario, they may not proceed at all. This may mean that the council allocation is not fully utilised.
- 3.14 While the Council is now committed to the ESF projects, it is still endeavouring to look at opportunities to secure added value from our investment, for example, by building upon the current mechanism in place for social clause referrals. If the Council agrees to the match funding amounts for the coming financial year, it is proposed that we should work across the projects to encourage greater collaboration and to share relevant information, for example, on emerging Council opportunities or on other development activity in the planning pipeline. Likewise, the economic intelligence information that we gather as part of the Belfast Agenda development and through our membership of the UU Economic Policy Centre should be shared with partners to identify opportunities for greater forward planning, in line with emerging growth sectors and new developments and opportunities.
- 3.15 Lenadoon Community Forum
- This non-ESF project was awarded £25,000 towards their 'Training for Employment' project with additional match funding from Ulster Bank's Skills and Opportunities Fund for one year only. To continue this project Lenadoon have requested match funding of £25,000 from the Council



towards a total project cost of £107,000. This project provides a range of training up to and including Levels 2 and 3.

### **3.16 Financial and Resource Implications**

In agreeing to provide Council match funding for Year Two, the following caveats should be satisfied:

- Performance in Year One should be deemed satisfactory to permit progression to Year Two, as determined by DEL.
- Projects will be required to confirm to Council that all match funding has been secured and enter into a funding agreement with Council on this basis.
- Council funding should be provided on a pro-rata basis, based on actual expenditure and achievement of targets, capped at the funding levels approved for each project. Variances to project activity may be permissible by prior agreement with the council but the funding available will not exceed the amount set out below.

### **3.16 The funding allocations recommended are as follows:**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Proposed BCC Match Funding Year 2</b>
<b>LEMIS Partnership</b>	<b>£80,000</b>
<b>Springboard</b>	<b>£35,000</b>
<b>Shankill Women's Centre</b>	<b>£25,000</b>
<b>Women's TEC</b>	<b>£35,000</b>
<b>Workforce</b>	<b>£25,000</b>
<b>Women in Business</b>	<b>£15,000</b>
<b>Lenadoon (Non-ESF)</b>	<b>£25,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£240,000</b>

### **3.17 Equality and Good relations implications**

None"

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Beltech Conference - Request to sponsor**

The Committee was reminded that the Council had supported the inaugural Belfast Technology Conference event which had taken place in April 2014 and the second conference which had taken place in April 2015. The sponsorship from the Council for both years had been £15,000. A request had now been received for a funding contribution of £10,000 towards the delivery of the Belfast Technology Conference 2016 (BelTech).

The Members were advised that the 2015 conference had brought together technology and business leaders, as well as politicians from Belfast, USA and Europe. They were advised that the 2016 conference would again be held at Titanic Belfast and would target technology professionals, tech business owners, potential business founders and post primary school children, teachers and university students. The Members were advised that representatives from UC Berkeley, California and Uber had been invited as keynote speakers and that, to date, twelve key speakers had been confirmed.

The finance requested from the Council for the 2016 event was sponsorship of £10,000, a reduction of £5,000 from previous years, and it was outlined that sponsorship of the Belfast Technology Conference would provide the Council with the following:

- a full page advertisement in the conference brochure;
- prime time positioning of the Council logo on all materials (including the website, press ads, marketing materials);
- inclusion in pre-event publicity and post event publicity;
- relevant promotional material in delegate packs;
- prime exhibition space and an opportunity for additional displays throughout the venue;
- delegate passes (number still to be agreed);
- an opportunity for additional exhibition stand for Invest NI to promote innovation space across NI, in particular Forthriver Innovation Centre and North Foreshore;
- an opportunity for an additional exhibition stand for Enterprise NI to promote the 'Go for it' business start programme;
- access to networking events for companies participating on BCC creative and digital industry programmes; and
- that 10 post-primary schools were expected to attend, representing 200 pupils from all areas of the city.

The Committee:

1. considered and approved Council sponsorship of £10,000 to support the BelTech conference which would be held in Belfast on 21st and 22nd April 2016; and
2. noted that this would be met from the current Economic Development unit budgets.

### **Stall increase - St. George's Market**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1** The purpose of this report is to propose an increase in the stall fee for St George’s Market with effect from 1 April 2016, and to agree to further work to look at an appropriate fee structure, in order to support the future development of the market.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- Note and agree the proposal to increase the stall fee at St George’s Market, from £14, to £15 per stall per day, from 1 April 2016.
- Note the proposal to review fees in the coming year and agree to receive a report at the end of 2016 with a proposal for stall fee levels with effect from 1 April 2017.

#### **3.0 Main report**

##### **3.1 Key Issues**

At the 18 February 2014 meeting of the Development Committee, Members agreed to increase the stall fees at St George’s Market by £1, to £14 per stall, with effect from 1 April 2014. There has not been an increase in stall fees since that date.

**3.2** Members will be aware that the success of St George’s Market has grown significantly in recent years. Much of this success is due to ongoing investment by the Council in the venue, working in close partnership with the traders.

**3.3** At present, the market attracts between 5,000 and 7,000 visitors on each market day (Friday, Saturday and Sunday). It is now one of the most significant visitor attractions in the city. In the 2015 calendar year, almost 1 million people visited the market.

**3.4** In addition to the weekend markets, St George’s hosted the first ever Twilight Market in November 2015. This event was a huge success, attracting 17,000 visitors on the evening. Due to the popularity of the event, and in line with the Year of

Food & Drink 2016, a number of Twilight Markets are scheduled to take place in 2016, each over a two night period in order to control pressures on the volume of people accessing the venue.

- 3.5 However, this success requires ongoing investment at the market in order to maintain standards. A review of the market in 2014 identified a number of infrastructure and staffing recommendations. Already £200,000 has been invested in infrastructure improvements in recent years. A staffing review is also under way at present, with a report due to be presented to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in February. This will provide additional front-facing staff at the market to deal with trader and customer queries, and will ensure that senior managers are present at all times.
- 3.6 The current stall fee of £14 represents very good value for money for traders, as it also includes marketing and promotion of the Market. Members will be aware that there are now a number of markets across the city. All of these markets are charging more than the fee for St George's. For example, Folktown Markets charges £60 per stall per day, and Fine & Dandy Market charges £25 per stall per day.
- 3.7 Currently, in St George's Market, there are on average 180 stalls per day. This generates an average income of approximately £9,000 per weekend, and an annual income of approximately £432,000. This overall figure includes a trader's contribution to utilities, for example, electricity. An increase of £1 per stall per day will generate an income of approximately £457,000. This income is used purely for the operational running costs of the market.
- 3.8 It is proposed that the stall fee is increased to £15 per stall per day, with effect from 1 April 2016. It is also proposed that a review of stall fees, and other potential income sources, is undertaken with a view to identifying how the fees can support the investment required to sustain the market into the future. This may require a differentiated approach e.g. for certain events or certain traders such as hot food traders who generate significant grease, steam and smoke which therefore requires ongoing investment in maintenance and equipment. A report will be brought back to the Committee at the end of 2016, to make recommendations for the relevant pricing structure from 1 April 2017.

### **3.9 Resource Implications**

This increase of £1 per stall per day, from £14 to £15, will generate a slight annual increase of approximately £25,920. This will be used to offset the running costs of the market. St George's costs approximately £480,000 to run every year. Council picks up the shortfall, and also the cost of maintaining and repairing the building.

### **3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**No specific equality or good relations implications.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **DRD Consultation exercise – Taxi ranks in Donegall Square**

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that it had agreed to defer making a decision on the recent consultation on public hire taxi rank provision within the Donegall Square area in order that representatives from both the Belfast Public Hire Taxi Service (BPHTS) and the Department of Regional Development (DRD) could present to the Committee at a special meeting on 3rd February, 2016. The Members were advised that the Council was required to provide its response to the DRD consultation which proposed an increase in public hire taxi rank provision within the Donegall Square area.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the Council's response to the DRD proposal would include:

- that the Council supported the proposed removal of restrictions on taxi access to one lane on Donegall Square West (closest to City Hall);
- that the Council supported the amendment to the taxi rank on Donegall Square North to allow increased capacity for ranking;
- that the DRD are requested to consider whether it would be appropriate to reallocate part/or all of the public hire taxi rank at Chichester Street for coach parking and allocate some of the coach parking space at Donegall Square West for a public hire taxi feeder rank, even on a trial basis, in consultation with relevant stakeholders such as representatives from coach operators and the PSNI; and
- that the DRD are requested to consider proposals to improve signage information to the public hire taxi ranks within the city centre in conjunction with the Council.

The Committee also noted:

- that public hire taxi access would be considered as part of the Council's ongoing implementation of the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Plan, and that experience of how public hire taxis operated in other UK cities would be investigated as part of that process;
- that information would be sought from the NI Assembly Committee for Regional Development on the proposed discussions relating to public taxi hire access in the city centre; and
- that an invitation had been extended to the Members of the Committee, by the Belfast Public Hire Taxi representatives, to undertake a tour of taxi rank facilities within the city centre if they wished.

### **Tourism, Events and International Relations**

#### **International Relations Framework - Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the delivery of the International Relations Framework (IRFW) 2013 – 2015 and to set out the proposed approach for developing a new framework, as part of a wider programme of City promotion.**

##### **2.0 Recommendations**

###### **2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- note the content of the report and;
- agree to receive a future report setting out the proposed future international relations framework, based on evaluation work undertaken by staff and supported external advice

##### **3.0 Main report**

###### **3.1 Key Issues**

**Members will be aware that one of the key commitments in the Council's Investment Programme 2012 - 2015 was that the Council would work with City partners to promote Belfast proactively on the international stage to attract trade and**

investment, increase visitor and student numbers and build the networks necessary to support growth.

- 3.2 In this context, an International Relations Framework and Action Plan were developed to shape how city stakeholders could work together to maximise the economic impact for Belfast.
- 3.3 The existing framework includes a number of aims and supporting objectives. These relate to developing meaningful partnerships with key cities in order to support economic growth in Belfast and to improve the perception of the city as a dynamic business location. The role of the city council is one of an enabler and broker, and the framework identifies the importance of involving other partner organisations in order to make the relationships sustainable.
- 3.4 This framework and a 2 year plan were agreed by Members at the August 2013 Development Committee. Since that time Members have received updates outlining delivery of the action plan and highlighting additional areas of work that have arisen within the broad framework that was agreed.
- 3.5 The purpose of this report is to identify activities that took place under the International Relations Framework, highlight some of the outputs to date, set out some of the key challenges and issues for the future framework and consider proposed future activity in the context of a changing internal and external environment.
- 3.6 Throughout the delivery of the International Relations Framework, the Council has sought to add value to, endorse and maximise international connections that already existed within the Council itself or with city stakeholders. We have done this by working closely with partners such as the universities, Invest NI, Belfast Metropolitan College, the British Council and government departments and agencies.
- 3.7 Overview of activity to date

The following actions have been delivered throughout the lifetime of the International Relations Framework 2013 – 2015:

- 3.8 USA
- Participated in South by South West in 2013, 2014 and 2015.
  - Undertook business mission to Nashville in 2013.

- Undertook exploration mission to Washington, New York, New Brunswick and Toronto in 2013.
- Hosted Nashville during Belfast Music Week in 2013.
- Undertook West Coast USA Tech Mission in 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- Undertook 5 outward missions to develop the Boston Sister City Agreement.
- Facilitated Belfast business mission to New York in 2014.
- Hosted Massachusetts State Senate visit in 2014.
- Hosted New York State Comptroller in 2014.
- Hosted Boston Police / Justice programme in 2014.
- Secured first ever NCAA Friendship Four ice hockey tournament in 2015.
- Facilitated Boston introductions for Belfast Youth Orchestra and the Outburst theatre company.
- Hosted New York Legislators visit in 2015.

### 3.9 Europe

- Input into European policy and funding programme development for the period 2014 – 2020.
- Undertook tourism showcase mission to Bilbao in 2013.
- Signed Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor MOU Agreement in 2013.
- Showcased Belfast at the Brussels annual Open Days in 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- Showcased Belfast at the Eurocities AGM in 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- Established and led the NI European Forum 2012 – 2015.

### 3.10 China

- Supported Chinese New Year 2013, 2014, 2015 with city stakeholders.
- Reviewed Belfast Sister City relationship with Hefei, attended Hefei Sister Cities Conference in 2013 and hosted 2 inward Hefei business, civic and arts missions to Belfast.
- Hosted 15 civic visits for Chinese students in Belfast over 3 years.
- Helped facilitate establishment of new Chinese Consulate Office opening in Belfast 2015 (Planning introductions, partner introductions and regular briefings).



- Hosted 5 inward business and political missions from China over 3 years.
- Supported local artists in Beijing through the Belfast Wave project exhibition 2013.
- Signed Friendly Cooperation agreement with Shenyang in 2013, leading to the interest of OFMDFM to open a satellite office in the Province in 2016.
- Undertaking city mission to Beijing and Shenyang in May 2016, in partnership with city stakeholders.

### 3.11 India

- Council exploratory visit to India in April 2013 in partnership with Invest NI and Tourism Ireland.
- Secured and hosted the Global India Business Meeting in June 2013.
- Delivered Belfast in India Week with 40 city events in June 2013.
- Hosted 2 ministerial visits from India in 2013.
- Facilitated Belfast Metropolitan College engagement in a British Council training for export project – UKIERI, supporting Belfast SME's into the Indian market, 2014 – 2015.
- Secure Challenge UK India project providing a platform to promote tourism, education and trade opportunities in India, September 2015 – March 2016.

### 3.12 Some of the Key outcomes to date include:

- The Global India event, which was attended by 300 delegates, generated 18 investment leads (some of which are still under development) and provided opportunities for 47 local companies to pitch to key partners/targets.
- Supported signature of link between NI Chamber of Commerce and Mumbai Chamber of Commerce as platform for future collaboration.
- £90,000 secured from UK Challenge Fund (supported by UKTI) to undertake promotional events in India for creative industries and music development sectors.
- Hosted the first annual Friendship Four Ice Hockey event, securing £275,000 of spend and significant positive media coverage for the city and event in the USA.
- Provided political and civic support to facilitate development of local university and colleges work in China
- Secured \$20,000 bursary for two Belfast schools through Boston contacts.

- Secured EU funding for Waterfront Hall and Innovation Factory development.
- Supported expert development opportunities for 60 local businesses to USA markets on West Coast (Tech Mission) and in Austin (through SXSW participation).
- Brokered introductions to relevant partner institutions in USA, helping local business to develop new clients and joint ventures.
- New clients and joint ventures secured through the Council's brokerage of introductions of small businesses to US partner institutions.

### **3.13 Interim Activities (2016/17)**

While the details of the new International Relations Framework have not been finalised, there are a number of existing commitments already in place for the coming year. In endorsing these activities, Members have taken account of the fact that, in the absence of the agreed framework, the proposed activities contribute to a range of broader council initiatives. These include the Belfast Agenda, the Integrated Tourism Framework and the City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy. Activities will include:

- Council participation in Sister Cities Summit in Dublin in April 2016 (subject to committee approval), as well as hosting Nashville and Boston delegations in Belfast in advance of the Dublin event.
- Lord Mayor visit to Boston in February 2016 to develop additional economic linkages, including planning for potential inward business mission at the end of 2016.
- Further development work on Youth Transformation Project between Boston and Belfast.
- Lord Mayor to undertake civic visit to Nashville in March 2016, including participation in Tourism Ireland promotional event.
- Attendance at South by Southwest music business event as part of business delegation with Invest NI.
- Continue to explore relevant EU funding opportunities for Belfast City Council, in line with corporate priorities.
- Civic visit to Shenyang alongside academic and business partners in May 2016.

**3.14 Future Framework**

Members will acknowledge that, since the development of the International Relations Framework in 2013, there are now a number of strategic discussions with which any future international relations framework should align. These include the Belfast Agenda, City Centre Regeneration, and Investment Strategy and Place Positioning.

**3.15** In addition to developments within the council, our key partners have also been working on a number of frameworks of which we should be cognisant. These include:

- NI Executive International Relations Strategy 2014 – 2020
- NI Executive China Strategy 2015 – 2020
- Invest NI's Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020
- DETI's Export Matters Strategy 2016 – 2020
- Emerging new Programme for Government
- Revised Northern Ireland Economic Strategy

**3.16** As such, when developing a new International Relations Framework, consideration must be given to the changing context for intervention. Likewise, greater focus will be placed on the added value of investment along with consideration of resources and the ability to secure partner buy-in.

**3.17** In order to develop the new framework, it is proposed that officers undertake some early engagement with partner organisations to establish the added value that the Council can bring. This will be supported by independent advisory support to look at how this issue is managed in other areas and to give an objective view of the best way forward for the council and the city, including consideration of how measureable outcomes can be established.

**3.18 Financial and Resource Implications**

A maximum of £10,000 (from within the agreed budget) will be used to undertake the international relations review work.

**3.19 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

Officers will work with the Equality Officer to determine how equality and good relations should be considered in the development of the future Framework.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Draft City Events Unit - Programme 2016-17  
and Strategic Review**

The Committee considered the undernoted Draft Programme of Events for 2016/17:

\*Members should note that target attendance figures are estimated and are subject to a number of extraneous factors; furthermore that the 'success' of an event should not be measured by attendance alone.

Event	Venue	Proposed Date(s)	Target no of attendees*	Estimated Budget
<b>Spring into Easter</b>	Belfast City Hall	Sat 26 - Tues 29 March	15,000	£115,000
<b>Circuit of Ireland Rally</b>	City Centre	Fri 8 - Sat 9 April	70,000	£25,000
<b>Belfast City Marathon</b>	Citywide	Mon 2 May	60,000	£26,000
<b>Belfast Titanic Maritime Festival</b>	Queens Quay Abercorn Basin Titanic Slipways	Sat 28 - Mon 30 May	50,000	£180,000
<b>Proms</b> ( <i>delivered by the BBC</i> )	Titanic Slipways	Sat 10 September	11,000	£95,000
<b>Autumn Fair</b>	Botanic Gardens	Sat 17- Sun 18 September	12,000	£40,000
<b>Halloween</b>	Titanic Slipways	Sun 30 or Mon 31 October	20,000	£120,000
<b>Christmas Lights Switch-On</b>	City Hall	Sat 19 November	10,500	£88,000
<b>St Patrick's Day</b>	City Hall & Custom House Sq	Fri 17 March 2017	15,000	£140,000
<b>Big Screen Animation</b>	City Hall	n/a	TBC	£27,250
<b>Support for Sport Grants Scheme</b>	n/a	n/a	40,000	£97,000
<b>Sail Training</b>	n/a	n/a	TBC	£20,000
<b>TOTAL COST:</b>	<b>£973,250</b>			

**CITY EVENTS UNIT PROGRAMME 16/17**  
**(EVENTS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY COUNCIL)**

Event	Venue	Proposed Date(s)	Target no of attendees*	Estimated Budget
UK National Pipe Band Championships	Stormont Estate	Sat 11 June	12,000	£180,000
All Ireland Irish Dancing Championships	Belfast Waterfront	Fri 28 Oct – Sun 6 Nov	2,500	£250,000
<b>TOTAL COST:</b>	<b>£430,000</b>			

The Committee:

1. agreed the draft City Events Unit Programme of Events for 2016/17; and
2. noted the current strategic review of the City's events and festivals and the recommended next steps.

**China outward Visit - May 2016**

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 24th April 2015, had agreed support for an outward visit to China in order to identify opportunities for collaborative activity between Belfast and Shenyang, China. This would be the first civic visit to Shenyang since a Memorandum of Understanding between Belfast and Shenyang had been signed in July 2013. At that time, the Council had agreed that the Lord Mayor, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, or their nominees, and one Officer would participate in the visit.

However, the Members were advised that there had been significant momentum in recent months and with a number of city partners having confirmed their willingness to engage in the visit. It was outlined to the Committee that, in addition to the civic request, Invest NI would lead a multi-sector trade mission to Shenyang for the first time and that there would also be representation from Belfast Metropolitan College, Queen's University and Northern Ireland Connections. The Members noted that the Confucius Centre at Ulster University had offered in-kind support by covering the costs of providing a translator for the visit. The Committee was also advised that, given the level of commitment from city partners, the Chief Executive would also take part in the council's delegation. The Members were also requested to consider approving the participation of an additional officer to ensure appropriate support for the delegation, the cost of which would be met from within the International Relations budget

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the update on the proposed visit to Shenyang in May 2016; and

2. agreed to the inclusion of one additional officer to accompany the delegation to ensure appropriate support for the programming and logistics.

### Regeneration

#### MIPIM Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update Committee on the preparations for MIPIM international property showcase, taking place in France from 15 -18 March 2016.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the report and agree the preparations underway and the delegation from Belfast private sector and BCC.
- Note the local event on Investment in Belfast will be on 25 February (venue tbc)

#### **3.0 Key Issues**

##### **Background**

- 3.1 On 18 Sept SP&R agreed Council should lead a city partnership delegation to MIPIM in March 2016. A budget of £60,000 was approved on the understanding there would be equivalent match funding from the private sector.
- 3.2 MIPIM attracts 20,000 delegates, including 4,500 investors and 1,500 developers. The purpose of the Belfast delegation is to attract investors in the real estate sector. We will achieve this by positioning the City alongside international counterparts; and by presenting investment and development opportunities in a compelling and deliverable manner.
- 3.3 In addition, MIPIM provides a platform to learn about our peer cities and understand the new methods currently being progressed to ensure cities are competitive.
- 3.4 A successful event to promote Belfast at MIPIM was held at Victoria Square on 27 November which was followed up with a number of one to one approaches. We now have 18 private sector partners who have agreed to join the City delegation.

- 3.5 In addition the MIPIM campaign has the support of Ulster University, Queens University, Invest NI, NI Screen and the BBC in helping to promote Belfast as a compelling location for investment and growth.
- 3.6 The 18 partners include: A&L Goodbody; Belfast Harbour; Bywater Properties; Carillion; CBRE; Deloitte; Kilmona Holdings; Lacuna Developments; Lagans; LSH; McAleer & Rushe; McLaughlin & Harvey; Lotus Group; 16 South; Stelify Media; Titanic Quarter; Todds; Bank of Ireland and Tughans.
- 3.7 Additional contributions in excess of £125,000 have been secured, which exceeds the minimum match funding target agreed with SP&R. This demonstrates the seed corn investment placed by the City Council in taking the stand has brought together a strong private sector lead showcase for our City.
- 3.8 The Belfast narrative for the event will be 'City of Talent'. This includes talent within specific sectors and in our educational achievement, but also includes a wider narrative of tenacity, innovation and creativity. The theme for the event will be Let's talk Belfast; Talent; Tax; Technology with the aim to ensure the key investment messages for Belfast are socialised and embedded in both the real estate and wider business sectors. In addition a targeted media campaign accompanies the event with coverage secured in the Financial Times (27th January 2016) as well as trade journals and national press.
- 3.9 The importance of this campaign is to ensure the city is considered alongside its peers for FDI investment and that the unique selling points of Belfast are clearly articulated.
- 3.10 MC2, a specialist communications management company, are supporting delivery, along with Belfast based Laynon Communications and Ardmore. The event programme is currently being finalised and a working draft available on modern.gov. However, key aspects of the programme include:
- Three themed days to cover:
    - i) *Creative industries; to highlight the thriving Creative Sector in Belfast* – UU will be presenting on stand on its investment into the city and its international standout of creative industries including digital animation.

ii) *Waterfront cities; Belfast a global port and waterfront city.* Presentations on waterfront developments including Titanic Quarter and the Belfast Waterfront.

iii) *Financial technology and professional services* - Presentations on stand to include Prof M Price from CSIT at QUB, Deloitte Digital and John Healy from Allstate on his Belfast experience of both Citibank and Allstate, as a compelling location for financial business due to talent base and productivity.

- Showcasing investment opportunities including strategic projects like NE Quarter, Transport Hub, Titanic Quarter, City Quays, Linen Quarter and the Cultural Hub. We also will major on the intention to reduce corporation tax from 20% to 12.5% in 2018 and what have a comparable corporation tax on the island of Ireland could provide.
- Events with other European partner cities including a specific Waterfront Cities event with Liverpool, Rotterdam, Lisburn, Oslo and Hamburg
- In addition we are expecting a significant announcement on the success of Belfast at an attractive business location for FDI.

3.11 Bringing together a Belfast business delegation of over 40 professionals across the business and public sector base, with a common aim of ensuring we are creating a legacy for our young and talented population, is a key driver for BCC in ensuring we can all meet the aims and ambitions of the Belfast Agenda.

3.12 Given the size of the Belfast delegation, the intensive programme and number of speaking engagements, the Chair and Deputy Chair of City Growth and Regeneration Committee (or their nominees), BCC Chief Executive, Directors of Development and Property and Projects, will also be required to attend to participate in the majority of the week's events programme. Two support staff will also be required to attend. Costs will be taken from the overall MIPIM budget, which has been heavily supported by the private sector.

3.13 It is proposed that this will not be a one off event but that 2016 will create a long lasting legacy of true partnership. The private sector's commitment to come together was demonstrated in the investment raised, amounting to double the Council's contribution, and in its determination to ensure Belfast stands shoulder to shoulder with its European peers.



**3.14 An event to promote this new partnership and the investment in Belfast will be held from 12-2pm on 25 February (venue tbc). All members of the committee are invited to attend, with further details to follow.**

**3.15 Finance and Resource Implications**

**A £60,000 contribution from the existing City Centre budget was authorised by SP&R in Sept 2015. Due to financial contributions from partners, the initiative has met the minimum threshold required. There are no further resource implications.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Restricted Items**

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

**East Bank - Sirocco/Queen's Quay**

The Chief Executive reminded the Members that the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) had identified Special Action Areas (SAA) for areas which were in need of an immediate, detailed and integrated planning approach.

She undertook to provide the Committee with an overview of the proposed way forward for the East Bank area which encompassed the Sirocco site, Queen's Quay and the linkage with the Titanic Quarter, East Belfast and the City Centre, as part of the ongoing approach to the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy. She outlined to the Members that the East Bank area contained major development opportunities, planned transport interventions, such as Rapid Transit, and was situated in an important location between the east of the city and the traditional city centre. However, it was highlighted that the area currently suffered from poor accessibility and pedestrian connectivity and as a result, was disconnected from adjacent communities and the city centre.

During discussion, a Member requested that a specific reference to engaging with local communities be included within the strategy and the Committee agreed.

The Chief Executive explained that, in line with the Oxford Street / East Bank SAA, it was proposed that a detailed strategy be procured and undertaken for the area including Sirocco, Queens Quay and the Shatter Zone, to be referred to collectively as the East Bank. It was estimated that up to £60,000 of the City Centre budget be allocated to this specialist work in line with the agreed approach for delivery of the Investment Plan.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the proposed way forward for the East Bank area;
2. agreed that a detailed and integrated approach be undertaken for the area and that specialist advice be procured in line with the appended draft Terms of Reference; and
3. that a specific reference to local community engagement be included.

### **Outstanding Accounts**

The Chief Executive outlined that the City Growth and Regeneration Committee received around £7m of external income per year which included grant income, rent of Council property and fees and charges. The Committee was advised that, on occasion, a number of debtors who received services failed to pay. She advised the Members that this was despite the Central Transactions Unit (CTU) having implemented the Council's procedures for recovering outstanding debt.

The Committee was advised that debt had been caused by a company entering administration and being dissolved, with the company in question ceasing to exist from 21st September, 2012. The management of this particular debt had been through a long and protracted Legal process which had now been exhausted, where the advice from the Legal Services section was that there was no legal avenue left for the Council to successfully pursue the debt that did not expose the Council to unacceptable risk of incurring yet more unrecoverable costs. The Members were advised that the bad debt totalled £17,573.14.

The Committee agreed to authorise that the outstanding accounts, totalling £17,573.14, be written off in accordance with Section M12 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

Chairperson