

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 7th February, 2018

## MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor O'Donnell (Chairperson);  
The High Sheriff (Councillor Howard);  
Aldermen Haire, Kingston and McGimpsey;  
Councillors Beattie, Boyle, Dorrian,  
Dudgeon, Graham, Hargey, Hussey,  
Magee, McAteer, Mullan, O'Hara and Walsh.

Also attended: Councillor Heading.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. D. Durkan, Director of Development;  
Ms. N. Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

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

### Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 10th and 24th 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

Councillors Howard and Graham declared an interest in Item 3a – European Social Fund, in that Councillor Howard was an employee of Belfast Met, and Councillor Graham was an employee of LEMIS. Both Members left the room for the duration of the discussion.

### Item Withdrawn from Agenda – Events and Festivals Strategy

The Committee noted that the above item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

**Matters Referred Back from Council/Motions**

**Motion: Problem Parking**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 1st February, had considered the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Lyons:

“This Council recognises the concerns of many communities across Belfast in respect to ‘problem parking’ in their neighbourhoods, primarily during day time work hours, and recognises the need for further substantive engagement to address and resolve this issue.

To date, strategies and campaigns have had minimal impact in solving these communities’ difficulties.

In mind of ambitious investment and expansion plans contained in the Belfast Agenda, the Council calls for immediate, co-ordinated action to improve parking measures and notes the lack of enforcement action to date with respect to bus and cycle lanes.

This motion also reaffirms the Council’s commitment to full implementation of its car parking strategy, delivering proper parking infrastructure and taking appropriate action against those who show daily disregard for local communities.”

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion had been referred to the Committee for consideration.

A Member stated that he had met with the PSNI in relation to the serious parking problems across the City and that the situation was getting worse.

A further Member agreed, stating that she lived in an area which had been affected by problem parking for a number of years. She stated that the communities which bounded the city centre should be involved in discussions with the Department for Infrastructure.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the contents of the motion; and
2. agreed that there would be engagement with those communities which bounded the city centre, in conjunction with the Department for Infrastructure, to discuss the issues within the motion.

### **Restricted Item**

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

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

### **European Social Fund**

(Councillors Graham and Howard left the room for the duration of the discussion on this item)

The Committee agreed to defer consideration, to a Special meeting on 21st February, of the allocation of the Employability and Skills European Social Fund (ESF) match funding budget.

### **Requests to Present**

#### **NI Water**

The Committee acceded to a request from NI Water to attend a future meeting of the Committee to provide an update on the investment which it was making within the City and also to receive an update on the Living with Water programme.

#### **MJM - Refurbishment of Cruise Ships**

The Committee acceded to a request from the MJM Group to present to a future meeting on its property investments within the city and on its plans to develop a new high value industry fitting out cruise ships in the Belfast Harbour.

### **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

#### **MIPIIM 2018 – Update**

The Director of City Centre Development provided the Committee with an update on the preparations for MIPIIM 2018, which would take place at the Palais de Festivals in Cannes, between 13th and 16th March.

She reported that, following the successful launch event for Belfast at MIPIIM 2018, which had taken place on 22nd November, 2017, private sector sponsorship was higher than last year and that sponsors included representatives from the property development, architecture, construction and professional services industries.

The Committee was advised that the Belfast delegation would use more high impact, targeted events this year, with an increased presence on the main conference agenda and co-hosting events with other cities.

The Director highlighted that a number of high profile marketing events would take place over the three days, showcasing the City's key sectors, cultural offering and development and investment opportunities to the occupier and investor communities. She also outlined that there would be a number of investor focused events sponsored by Invest NI and Arup respectively.

In addition, the Committee noted that Belfast had been invited to take part in a number of events alongside other cities, including a panel discussion on the main MIPIM conference stage on the topic of "Global cities: the new powerhouses".

In response to a Member's question regarding the VU.CITY interactive 3D model, the Director confirmed that it would be completed by the end of February.

The Committee noted the approach to Belfast at MIPIM 2018, including the programme of events being planned.

#### **City Events Unit - Programme 2018/2019**

The Director of Development outlined to the Members that the Council's City Events Unit delivered a series of high profile public events which were free to access by both citizens and visitors to the city.

He explained that, in 2017/2018, it was estimated that those events had generated over £16million of additional economic activity and 317,527 visitors through the programme.

The Committee was advised that the programme included a number of specific events in 2018, for which the Committee had previously agreed to provide funding. He outlined that these included the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, the BBC Biggest Weekend, the BBC Proms in the Park and the World Vespa Gathering. It was also pointed out to the Members that the Committee had agreed, in January 2015, to fund the Royal Scottish Pipe Bands Association's UK National Piping Championships for three years.

He outlined to the Committee the following draft programme of events which would be delivered or supported by the Council's City Events Unit in 2018/2019:

| <b>Event</b>               | <b>Proposed 2018-2019 Programme Agreed Estimates (£)</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Lord Mayor's Day           | 50,000                                                   |
| UK Pipe Band Championships | 165,000                                                  |
| Maritime                   | 211,114                                                  |

|                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Autumn Fair                 | 50,000            |
| Halloween                   | 155,000           |
| Christmas                   | 93,000            |
| Vespa World Gathering       | 30,000            |
| BBC Music Events            | 200,000           |
| St. Patrick's Day           | 140,000           |
| Support for Sport           | 77,000            |
| Sail Training               | 20,000            |
| Belfast City Marathon       | 26,000            |
| Major Sports Events Bidding | 10,000            |
|                             |                   |
|                             | <b>£1,227,114</b> |

The Committee agreed the draft City Events Unit Programme of Events for 2018/2019.

### **NI Tourism Alliance - Governance and Structure**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of correspondence received from Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) regarding the creation of the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance (NITA). At the City Growth & Regeneration Committee meeting in January, Members asked for a number of clarifications on a previous report on this proposal.**

**1.2 TNI have asked that Belfast City Council becomes a member of the Alliance at a cost of £2,000 per year.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Consider the request for Belfast City Council to become a member of the NI Tourism Alliance.**

- Approve the contribution of £2,000 per annum for an initial period of 3 years.
- Funding to come from within the Development Department's existing budget.

**3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1** Members will be aware of the growing importance of the tourism industry to Belfast and Northern Ireland. It is estimated that around 18,000 people are employed in the tourism and hospitality sector. The significant growth in hotel development – with an additional 1,000 rooms becoming available in 2018 – will only serve to increase the employment potential of the sector.
- 3.2** At present, hospitality accounts for around 5.2% of GDP. This is around half of the figure for comparative cities across the UK and this demonstrates the potential for additional development.
- 3.3** Unlike other industry sectors, tourism and hospitality does not have a strong industry body to represent its interests to government and to provide a focal point for engagement with the sector. Taking account of this, Tourism NI has been working with a number of key representatives from the sector and agreement has been reached to establish the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance.
- 3.4** Recently, a number of trade associations and tourism businesses comprising senior and influential stakeholders from across the NI tourism sector have come together in recent months to seek the formation of such a body. Tourism NI as the lead agency for the development of tourism in Northern Ireland has sought to support the group in its efforts by facilitating this process. However, it is important to note that whilst Tourism Northern Ireland is a non-departmental public body of the Department for the Economy (DFE) this initiative is private sector led.
- 3.5** The group has progressed matters to the point of incorporation of a LTD Company with agreed Articles of Association in place. It is their desire for this Limited Company to be formally known as 'The Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance'. Such a name will demonstrate that the organisation speaks with the necessary authority as a pre-eminent and substantial representative for its sector across Northern Ireland.

- 3.6 The purpose of the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance is to champion the tourism sector and its benefits to the regional economy, make the case for resources to be made available for the development and delivery of tourism growth, including the work of local government, and to advocate for positive policy change in areas such as VAT, Air Passenger Duty and Licencing Legislation.
- 3.7 A Steering Group has been established to explore the potential for creating an independent, private sector – led representative body for the tourism industry. The group met in early December 2017 and the meeting was facilitated by Tourism NI and chaired by Ellvena Graham, Chair of NI Chamber of Commerce and Chair of Belfast Waterfront Board.
- 3.8 The Steering Group agreed that it would be important to have all 11 Local Authorities engaged as members of the Alliance, given local government's role in delivering major visitors attractions, visitor servicing through Tourist Information Centres, regeneration and development of their local tourism industries. It was also recognised that given the scale of the contribution made by the local government sector that it should be afforded a seat at the Executive of the Alliance.
- 3.9 Membership of the NI Tourism Alliance
- Currently seventeen organisations from the tourism industry have agreed to become members. These organisations will represent the views of its membership (smaller organisations) and make submissions and representations to industry leaders, government departments, agencies and other bodies which impact upon the tourism industry in Northern Ireland so as to develop a collective position on behalf of the sector. In order to ensure the Alliance is suitably resourced these organisations have also agreed to make a financial contribution of £5,000 so that the alliance is suitably resourced to fulfil its objectives. These organisations include: Belfast Harbour, George Best Belfast City Airport, Belfast International Airport, British Airways, Aer Lingus, FlyBe, NI Hotels Federation, National Trust, National Museums NI, Titanic Belfast, Visit Belfast, Hospitality Ulster, Translink, Stena Line, ABTA, NI Federation of Passenger Transport and Food NI.
- 3.10 In addition, it was felt that local authorities would have a good understanding of local tourism opportunities and challenges so it would be productive to have local government representation on the Executive.

**3.11 Partnership with ROI (The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation)**

The Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance will work with the equivalent partner in the ROI (The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation - ITIC) and other jurisdictions where it is mutually beneficial to do so, collating research in international markets for example and the sharing of information and best practice. The former CEO of the ITIC was an adviser to the steering group tasked with setting NITA up.

**3.12 Tourism NI's Role**

Tourism NI will provide £30,000 support and will act as observers at meetings of Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance. This is to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that the group is independent from Government. This reflects the position adopted by Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland in relation to Irish Tourism Industry Confederation in the ROI.

**3.13** The Steering Group has proposed that each of the Councils contribute £2,000 per annum towards the running costs and all Councils have been approached to provide this support.

**3.14** A Board will be appointed by the members at the first full meeting of the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance. It has been agreed that the Board should be reflective of the breadth of the tourism industry. It has however been agreed by the Steering Group that there will be at least one local government representative on the Tourism Alliance Board to reflect the collective contribution of Councils to the body and its importance within the tourism industry.

**3.15** It is considered that the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance will provide a useful vehicle for engagement with the industry. Likewise, it will help increase the profile of the industry to government and, in turn, help shine the spotlight on the economic potential of the sector. This is likely to lead to additional focus and resources being directed to support sector growth. Given the potential of the sector in Belfast, this will have a positive impact on the City.

**3.16 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

No specific equality or good relations implications.

### **3.17 Financial and Resource Implications**

**The contribution required from Belfast City Council is £2,000 per annum for three years initially and would be provided from existing Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts annual budget.”**

The Committee:

1. agreed to the request for Belfast City Council to become a member of the NI Tourism Alliance;
2. agreed the contribution of £2,000 per annum for an initial period of 3 years;
3. agreed that officers should engage with Tourism NI to ensure that Belfast had appropriate representation on the NI Tourism Alliance Board; and
4. noted that funding would come from within the Development Department’s existing budget.

### **BelTech Conference 2018**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to recommend a funding contribution of £6,000 from the agreed economic development budget (reduced from the previous year) towards the delivery of the Belfast Technology Conference 2018 (BelTech).**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to:

- **Consider and approve the request for sponsorship of £6,000 to support the BelTech conference to be held in Belfast on 3-4 May 2018.**

#### **3.0 Main Report**

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

**Members will be aware that one of the key priorities of the Belfast Agenda is Growing the Economy. Central to this pillar of activity is the commitment to increase business start-up, build support for business growth and encourage additional investment in the City.**

- 3.2 **Belfast's economic growth in recent years has been driven by technology-focused businesses operating across a range of sectors. These companies are both FDI businesses and small, indigenous companies that are developing products and services here that are being exported worldwide or have the potential to do so.**
- 3.3 **Over the course of the last few years, there have been a number of annual tech-focused business conferences and events that have sought to showcase best practice, encourage collaboration between businesses and encourage young people to become engaged in the tech sector. The growing support for the Smart City Agenda means that the Council and the City are now looking at technology not only as a business product but also as a way of changing the way we all do business.**
- 3.4 **Belfast City Council supported the inaugural Belfast Technology Conference event which took place in April 2014 and the subsequent conferences in April 2015, 2016 and 2017. Sponsorship from the Council was reduced from £15,000 to £10,000 in 2016 and £8,000 in 2017 with the view to reducing the reliance on Council funding each year as the conference grows and becomes self-sustaining.**
- 3.5 **The 2017 conference took place over the course of 3 days at Titanic Belfast and brought together technology and business leaders from around the globe to showcase emerging technologies to support the industry to innovate and compete effectively at a global level.**
- 3.6 **The 2017 conference also helped educate and inspire the next generation by engaging with school children, parents and teachers about the potential of a career in digital technology.**
- 3.7 **BelTech 2017 attracted a total of 650 attendees, which is an increase of 250 since its inception in 2014. Around 250 of these were technology professionals and 400 were students. 2017 was the first year that the event trialled two stages with a technology theme. Whilst one focused on Software Engineering only, the other featured discussions on Internet of Things (IOT), Immersive Tech and Cyber Security.**
- 3.8 **The 2018 conference will be held at the new BelTel Print Hall (the old Belfast Telegraph building) and will target technology professionals, technology business owners and potential funders as well as post primary school children, teachers and university students.**

- 3.9** We are currently working with the Department of the Economy and Digital Catapult UK, to develop space within the BelTel building as a hub for the Digital and Immersive Technology sectors and the city.
- 3.10** Housing the Beltech 2018 Conference in the BelTel Building will add value to and support our ambition for the building and the wider Cathedral Quarter area.
- 3.11** Key thematic areas for this year's conference include informing technology professionals and businesses of the emerging technologies and approaches that will allow them to innovate and compete effectively at a global market. As well as this the conference will also educate and inspire students and teachers about the potential of a career in technology, thereby building the digital skill base and reinforcing Belfast's global lead in this area.
- 3.12** BelTech 2018 will run over 2 days and will feature the following:
- **3 May:** Day 1 will focus on technology professionals and businesses and will feature curated conversations on User Experience, Artificial Intelligence, Immersive Technology, Software Engineering, Smart Cities and Cyber Security. An audience of 300 is expected on this day.
  - **4 May:** Day 2 is aimed at attracting 400 post primary school children and teachers and will feature a mix of engaging technology demonstrations, safety in using social media and a discussion of career pathways and opportunities.
  - **4 May:** On the evening of 4 May, the BelTech 50 awards will take place in order to highlight the success of the technology talent here in Belfast. This is expected to attract 200 attendees.
  - **Exhibition:** Throughout the 2 days, an exhibition of leading NI and Global high tech organisations will run to allow attendees to get a more detailed understanding of the people, products and innovations covered in the Conference. Education providers will also be among the exhibitors to advise students.
- 3.13** The overall aims and benefits of the BelTech conference include:

- Gaining an awareness of emerging technologies and practices that will improve participants' effectiveness and career development
- Interacting with highly successful tech/business leaders and role models
- Building personal networks and enhancing career prospects
- Contributing to building a vibrant technology community and culture in Belfast and NI that can compete effectively on a global scale
- Contributing to the NI Innovation Strategy
- Informing students and young people about the types of technology careers available and advising them on routes into employment
- Inspiring students and young people by successful role models and their stories
- Supporting teachers to provide quality careers guidance and advice on future employment opportunities for students in this field
- Developing awareness among key international companies of Belfast capability as a source of technology talent.

3.14 The finance requested from Council is £6,000, a reduced amount to the previous year. Sponsorship of the event will provide Council the following:

- Speaking roles for the Lord Mayor, CEO and for a representative of the council on the Smart Cities panel
- Full page advertisement in conference magazine
- Primetime positioning of BCC logo on all materials including website and all promotional materials
- Prime exhibition space
- Permission to display unlimited company marketing stands at the venue
- Included in pre and post event publicity
- 10 delegate passes
- Sponsorship of an award at the BelTech Awards
- 10 tickets for the awards

3.15 It is proposed that the delegate passes will be offered to local technology businesses on our Venture for Success and Creative Industries programmes. A number of Council Officers will also attend to staff the exhibition stand. Should Members wish to attend the event, they should advise Officers and arrangements can be made to enable them to do so.

**3.16** Members will be aware that Business Support activities delivered by the Council's Economic Development Unit concentrate primarily on starting a business, growing a business and investing in Belfast as well as supporting Employability and Skills. The range of initiatives delivered are developed based on research and engagement with partners to identify what will make the most significant contributions to the outcomes set out in the Belfast Agenda.

**3.17** In addition to programme activity, Council's Economic Development Unit identifies opportunities to engage with local events, such as BelTech, that are aligned to the Council's strategic priorities. These events act as a pipeline of enquiries and clients to avail of Council led business support programmes.

**3.18** Financial & Resource Implications

The total budget requested is £6,000 which will be met from Economic Development Budgets. This has already been set aside as part of the 2018/19 estimates.

**3.19** Organisers are forecasting an additional £50,000 in sponsorship from other private and public sector partners. They consider that, in the longer-term, the event will become self-funding.

**3.20** Equality or Good Relations Implications

**No specific equality or good relations considerations."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**City for Investment Service**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the City for Investment Service, in order that Party Group Briefings would be provided on the matter.

The Committee further agreed that the research referenced in the report, in relation to the levels of under-represented groups involved in entrepreneurship and business start activity across Belfast, would be made available at the briefings.

**Peace and Beyond Conference – Update**

The Director of Development provided the Committee with an update on the upcoming Peace and Beyond Conference, which would take place in Belfast from 10th-12th April.

He pointed out to the Members that 10th April, 2018, would mark twenty years since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and that the British Council was working with both Queen's University and Ulster University, as well as the Centre for Democracy and Peace Building, to host a major conference in Belfast to mark the event.

The Director explained to the Members that the objective of the Conference was to bring together policy makers and peace practitioners from around the world to share reflections on the experience of various peace processes, with the events building on the Northern Ireland experience of, and expertise in, conflict resolution and peace building.

He outlined to the Committee that the British Council had invited a number of individuals who had played a key role in the Good Friday Agreement negotiations to attend, including former President of the United States of America, Bill Clinton. The Members were advised that, while a decision on whether President Clinton would attend the Conference had not been confirmed, a number of senior representatives involved in peace-building in South Africa, Libya, Colombia, Serbia and Lebanon had already confirmed their attendance. It was pointed out to the Members that the event would attract more than 200 international visitors to the City.

The Director highlighted to the Members that one of the main aims of the Conference was to highlight the key role played by local organisations and institutions in building and securing the peace process in Northern Ireland. He explained that one day would be dedicated to a series of site visits, including the Girdwood Hub and the Innovation Factory, which would also offer an opportunity to showcase and highlight the role that Belfast City Council played in supporting local communities to build sustainable approaches to peace and to encourage inclusive economic growth within the City.

He advised the Members that the opening reception for the Conference would take place in Belfast City Hall on 10th April, with a proposed budget allocation of £20,000 towards cultural animation and hospitality at the opening event. He explained that the funding had been set aside in departmental estimates for 2018/2019.

The Committee was advised that the British Council had offered to provide six complimentary tickets for elected Members to attend the Conference. During discussion, a Member suggested that the Committee request additional complimentary conference tickets to enable independent Councillors, who were not members of one of the six main political parties, to also attend.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the update on the upcoming Peace and Beyond Conference which would take place in Belfast from 10-12th April 2018;
2. noted that the opening reception would take place in Belfast City Hall on 10th April 2018 and agreed a budget allocation of up to £20,000 towards cultural animation and hospitality at that event. The funding had been set aside within existing Development Department budgets;
3. agreed to accept the offer from the British Council to provide six complimentary tickets, to include the attendance of the

4. Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson (or their nominees) and a representative from each of the other four main political parties to avail of the other complimentary tickets; and
5. agreed that a request be made to the British Council for additional complimentary tickets for other Councillors to attend the Conference.

### **Profiling Belfast Through International Cultural Engagement**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

##### **1.1 The purpose of this report is to:**

**Update Members on a number of international profiling opportunities for Belfast, focusing on the cultural and creative talent in the City.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

##### **2.1 Members are asked to:**

- **Note the range of international profiling opportunities for Belfast, profiling the City’s creative and cultural talent**
- **Note the opportunities for increased engagement with the City’s investment messaging as well as the potential for additional partnership engagement with relevant organisations in Belfast’s Sister Cities, to promote cultural and business exchanges.**

#### **3.0 Main report**

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

**Members will be aware of the increased focus of the Council and its partners in promoting Belfast as a business and investment location. On the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) side, the Council works closely with Invest NI in supporting that organisation’s work in bringing new investment to Northern Ireland. As set out in a separate report, working relationships are extremely positive between the organisations and we are in the process of putting in place an MoU to set out our parameters of engagement on Foreign Direct Investment support.**

- 3.2 On the capital investment side, the City Centre Development Team has been leading on a number of initiatives to create confidence in the investment market and to bring forward new investment schemes. This includes the Council support for the £18.7million City Centre Investment Fund (CCIF) as well as proposals for the development of a new City Centre Visitor Attraction and regeneration frameworks for key development zones in the City Centre and surrounding areas.
- 3.3 One of the key factors in any investment decision – either capital investment or Foreign Direct Investment – is the wider City ‘offer’ in terms of quality of life, city ambition and vibrancy. A City’s cultural provision is a key pillar of that ‘offer’ as it gives confidence to investors that it is a City that open to attracting people in and catering for the range of cultural tastes and interests. Recognising that this is a critical factor in our efforts to sell Belfast internationally, the marketing materials and messaging draw attention to the fact that Belfast is a dynamic, vibrant location with a sense of energy and ambition. The city narrative and brand emphasises this sense of vibrancy and uniqueness in a very competitive investment market.
- 3.4 The sense of momentum and ambition created through the development work on the European City of Culture (ECoC) bid as well as the success of some of the major cultural events and initiatives that take place across the City each year highlight the ambition and potential of the City’s cultural sector. Recognising this potential, the Council has committed to supporting a number of profiling opportunities in which the cultural offer is in the lead but where it is supported by the City investment messaging. These include:
- 3.5 South by South West (SXSW)
- South by South West (SXSW) is a global gathering for the interactive, digital and music sectors. The event takes place in Austin, Texas every year and regularly attracts visitors from all across the world. The event comprises a series of conferences, seminars, workshops and presentations on issues related to the development of the creative sectors.
- 3.6 Belfast has attended the event over the last ten years. Delegations have involved both civic and business representatives. The Council has provided support for five local companies to attend the event and has helped them prepare for the event in order to maximise the benefits of their visit. The Council will also host three investment and

business to business events. The Lord Mayor will accompany the Belfast delegation.

- 3.7 The five Belfast companies will be accompanied by another 10 NI companies – supported by Invest NI. There will also be four musicians from Northern Ireland who have been successful in their application to attend the event (there is an open call process by SXSW for musicians' attendance).
- 3.8 The planned format for 2018 takes into account learning gained from the previous missions, which highlighted the need to increase businesses access to buyers and to better utilise SXSW to promote Belfast as an investment location for the CDI sector. The key elements of the mission – hosted by the Lord Mayor – include:
- 3.9 **Output Belfast: City Investment – event to promote Belfast and investment opportunities in the City through the promotion of key sectors and initiatives including the creative digital, Cyber sectors and the Smart Cities ambitions. This will be an invitation-only networking event that provides business to business networking for Belfast City Council and the delegation and key US companies and civic stakeholders and partners/associates from the City of Austin, our Sister Cities of Nashville and Boston. This event will take place in Austin's leading digital hub, the Capital Factory.**
- 3.10 **Output Belfast: Creative Convergence – event to promote Belfast and the key sectors and initiatives with a focus on the creative digital industries. This will be an invitation-only networking event that provides business to business networking for Belfast business delegation and key SXSW attendees including Sony, Warner Brothers and Spotify.**
- 3.11 **Output Belfast: Music – music showcase and networking event with a focus on promoting the music industry in Belfast and supporting participating bands and musicians identify business opportunities which will be marketed as a key part of the 'Official SXSW 2018 Programme'.**
- 3.12 **Belfast International Arts Festival**

The Belfast International Arts Festival (BIAF) is a key city international arts event, with performances, exhibitions and spectacles taking place across the city in October each year. Their mission is to create a civic event of contemporary arts and ideas of international appeal and stature. The international significance of the Festival is reflected in both the programme and its ability to attract leading artists

and events from around the world together with an extensive social media reach.

- 3.13 The International Festival has embarked on an ambitious programme to ensure that the event really is international in every aspect. That includes not only the international performers who come to the City for the event but also the visitors who are attracted by the standard of the cultural offering. In the last two years, BIAF have undertaken a number of international ‘launches’ of the event – focusing on the US (mainly New York) as well as Dublin and London launches.
- 3.14 For the New York launch, the Lord Mayor of Belfast travelled to New York to provide civic support to the messaging around the cultural offer. This helped present a joined-up perspective of Belfast as a dynamic cultural and business location. At that time, the Lord Mayor also highlighted the development activity around the City’s plans to become the European Capital of Culture in 2023.
- 3.15 This visit also generated significant additional ‘ambassador’ support for Belfast as a dynamic cultural location and investment destination. For example, the team was able to secure video message support for ECoC from Liam Neeson, Roma Downey, Geraldine Hughes and other major figures from the creative sector who are originally from Northern Ireland. They also met potential investors and companies.
- 3.16 The New York launch event for the International Festival provided a focal point for discussion on and promotion of the transformation of Belfast into a vibrant, outward-looking City with a rich heritage and a strong cultural product. Leveraging Council support for this work, the Northern Ireland Bureau and Tourism Ireland also provided funding to support the delivery of the event and to secure PR and media coverage. On the back of the launch event, the Lord Mayor also met a number of existing and potential inward investors through the Invest NI Office as well as some of the key political representatives in New York. This visit has generated additional opportunities in terms of inward investment and cultural and education partnerships which are currently being pursued by the Council and other partner organisations.
- 3.17 Final monitoring reports for the Belfast International Arts Festival are not yet complete but, at this point, it is understood that the event attracted more than 60,000 visitors (excluding visitors to the Poppies: Weeping Window at the Ulster Museum) and the print, online and broadcast value of

the coverage was in excess of £1million. This illustrates the potential to use events such as BIAF as a platform for profiling the City, as well as the importance of agreed messaging across all partners who are profiling Belfast on the international stage.

**3.18 Beckett at The MAC**

As part of an earlier visit to Belfast by a Boston delegation, connections were established with the creative team at the MAC. One of the Boston delegation – Professor Bob Scanlon – is an Associate Professor with Harvard University and a friend of the playwright Samuel Beckett. Prof Scanlon worked with the team at the MAC to support the staging of a co-production by the Poet's Theatre in Boston of four Beckett Plays – 'Beckett Women'. This was the inaugural project of a long term cultural exchange as part of the Boston-Belfast Sister Cities project.

**3.19** 11 performances took place at the MAC in early November 2017. As part of the Council support for this initiative, there were substantially discounted tickets for community groups, school children, tertiary level students, and for those under twenty-five, alongside standard concessionary rates.

**3.20** As a direct and linked follow up, Belfast-based creative directors / artists will take part in a follow up Development programme in Boston later this year in order to consolidate links and partnerships and develop training in specialist theatre practice and skills immersion led by Professor Scanlan and Harvard University, with a view to co-producing a new production which will be showcased in Belfast and Boston towards the end of 2018.

**3.21** An update report on our International Relations activity will be presented to the Committee in March 2018. This will include details of a proposed visit to Boston in 2018 as well as an inward mission from the City later this year. The cultural links established provide a unique platform for widening the City narrative as a dynamic business location with a vibrant, international cultural scene.

**3.22 Financial and Resource Implications**

The Council contribution to the SXSW attendance is £40,000. The Council support to the Belfast International Festival for its international programming and promotion work totalled £75,000. The Council support to the MAC for the hosting of the Beckett work and the ongoing cultural exchanges with

**Boston totalled £30,000. These funding allocations have been set aside within the Development Department's budget for the financial year 2017/18.**

**3.23 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**There are no specific equality or good relations implications."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Local Tourism Product Development Support**

The Director of Development advised the Members that work was currently under way to support the development of new tourism products across the City.

He reported that the vision was to develop Belfast and share its history by creating a destination that visitors to the city would want to experience first-hand. The Members were advised that the strategic goal was to double the value of tourism by 2020 by generating discretionary tourist overnight stays, especially higher value leisure and business tourism. He highlighted to the Committee that, currently, the tourism and hospitality sector contributed around 5% of Belfast's Gross Value Added (GVA), whereas other comparable locations had a figure closer to 11%, which showed significant potential for growth within the sector.

He explained to the Committee that, in order to encourage visitors to stay longer, the city needed to be assured that there was sufficient volume of high-quality tourism products which would allow them to fill their time in Belfast.

He reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 10th May 2017, it had agreed to provide support towards the development of local tourism in order to ensure that the benefits of tourism growth were felt across Belfast and not just in the City Centre.

The Members were advised that officers had been working with partners including Tourism NI, the East Belfast Partnership and Fáilte Feirste Thiar to identify and explore opportunities for supporting the development of local tourism and encouraging improved visibility of and access to the tourism product. The Director explained that some of the emerging ideas included the need for investment in local capacity building, as well as the need to support the development of new tourism product to capture the unique offer in each of the areas and an authentic Belfast experience.

The Director advised the Members that, while the work on the Local Tourism Programme would continue and extend to cover all areas of the City, it was felt that external support should be utilised in order to test out the feasibility and viability of a number of the product development concepts. He outlined that it would establish whether there was merit in seeking further investment support to help bring the new products to market in the context of potential investment opportunities through the City Deal and other relevant funding streams, including the re-casted Social Outcomes Fund, to support the City's growing tourism infrastructure.

The Committee agreed to provide up to £25,000 to commission external support to test the viability of emerging product development ideas in the City's neighbourhoods with a view to helping the Council and its partners to focus their investment on those products that were most likely to become sustainable businesses.

### **Growing Businesses and the Economy**

#### **Brexit N.I. Affairs Committee – BCC Response to Consultation**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee has opened a call for suggestions for themes for their next Brexit and Northern Ireland Inquiry. The call for suggestions will close on 22 February 2018. Suggestions are to be submitted electronically, and should set out the theme and why Brexit poses a particular challenge or opportunity in that area.**
- 1.2 The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Northern Ireland Office and its associated public bodies. It consists of 13 Members of Parliament and works principally by undertaking inquiries. For the inquiries, evidence is sought from a wide range of groups and individuals with relevant interests and experience to inform the Committee's findings and recommendations. The NI Affairs Committee has carried out Brexit related inquiries into the land border between Northern Ireland and Ireland and has opened a sub-inquiry into the implications of Brexit for the fishing industry in Northern Ireland.**
- 1.3 On 21 November 2017, the Committee held a Special meeting to focus on Brexit in order to explore the potential economic impact and to consider Belfast's resilience to meet the challenges and to take advantage of the opportunities for the future to ensure the economic growth and regeneration of the city. With input from a range of external expert perspectives, the Committee noted a number of potential areas of impact of particular relevance to achieving the ambitions for inclusive growth, attracting investment and growing the Belfast economy at its meeting on 6 December 2017.**
- 1.4 The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee's request for suggestions provides an opportunity to highlight the issues and opportunities of particular relevance to Belfast, and to**

have the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee apply its resources to investigate it.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 Based on the Committee's consideration of Brexit, the Committee is asked to:**

- Note the NI Affairs Committee themed approach to its next Brexit and NI Inquiry; and
- Consider and approve the suggested themes outlined at paragraph 3.6 to be submitted to the NI Affairs Committee as topic areas for the next Brexit and Northern Ireland Inquiry.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Key Issues**

At its meeting on 21 November, this Committee considered the potential impact and opportunities of Brexit within the context of the Belfast Agenda and Local Development Plan which have set a challenging and ambitious vision for the city in 2035, with inclusive growth at the centre. These plans are set within the current strategic and economic context, acknowledging the uncertainty and challenges and highlighting the importance of tackling the city's systemic social and economic issues such as economic inactivity to create sustainable economic growth.

**3.2 The potential impacts of Brexit are wide-reaching and there may be other issues that impact more directly on other Committees, such as regulatory and legislative changes. This Committee has acknowledged the following broad areas of particular relevance to achieving the ambitions for inclusive growth, attracting investment and growing the economy:**

- Attracting and retaining investment (particularly high value growth services such as financial services)
- Increasing trade (focusing on high growth services sector)
- Movement of people - securing a pipeline of talent and increasing tourism
- EU funding and any replacement funds
- European Capital of Culture designation and funding

**3.3 The Committee has noted that the growth and diversification of the Belfast economy is critical to maintaining its resilience in order to manage future economic changes, potential**

shocks and stresses. The success of Belfast as the region's key city is vital in the post-Brexit environment and there needs to be a real focus on ensuring that it continues to attract employers, visitors, investors, students etc to ensure economic prosperity for the city and the region as a whole.

**3.4** While further clarity and detail will be required to enable a full assessment of the impacts and opportunities as a result of Brexit; the following summary points have been noted by Committee at its December 2017 meeting:

- The need for clarity on the movement of people in terms of attracting and retaining talent for the city's high growth sectors/knowledge economy as well as cross-border workers, researchers, students etc. and boosting tourism;
- The importance of growing the local business base and accelerating alternative models such as social enterprises, co-operatives etc;
- The need to encourage social innovation to promote and secure prosperity across the city;
- The importance of harnessing the city's anchor institutions, such as universities, to maximise the local impact of their procurement as well as attracting investment;
- There are ways in which Belfast may benefit in certain sectors due to its location and proximity to Dublin; its competitive cost base may be an advantage;
- The professional services 'axis' of Belfast – Dublin - London offers a real opportunity to position the city;
- Ensuring connectivity (air, road, rail and digital connections) and appropriate infrastructure are crucial for growth;
- The Belfast Region City Deal is both a vehicle to improve prosperity and quality of life in the city-region as well as making the city-region more globally competitive;
- The vital role played by Council in demonstrating leadership to drive inclusive economic growth and the importance of delivering the programmes and plans to progress the ambitions for the city outlined in the Belfast Agenda.

**3.5** The NI Affairs Committee request for suggestions for future themes for the Brexit and Northern Ireland Inquiry provides a timely opportunity to highlight the issues and opportunities of particular relevance to Belfast and to inform the focus of work for the NI Affairs Committee.

**3.6 Focusing on delivering the Belfast Agenda ambitions to secure sustainable inclusive growth and position Belfast successfully in a more globally connected world, it is proposed that the following themes are submitted to the NI Affairs Committee for the next Brexit and Northern Ireland Inquiry:**

- **Assessment of the impacts, measures and incentives to ensure Belfast remains competitive in attracting and retaining investment especially Foreign Direct Investment**
- **The impacts and opportunities for attracting and retaining EU and international students and staff; and their contribution to the regional and city economy.**
- **The impacts and opportunities for the key growth sectors (including business and professional services, financial services and fintech, creative and digital sector, clean tech, cyber security). There are around 32,000 people employed in the Financial Services sector, this focus would enable consideration of the potential to maximise the professional services ‘axis’ of Belfast – Dublin – London**
- **The vital work on peace and social inclusion**
- **The Erasmus Programme of exchange**
- **The future role of the tourism sector in terms of connectivity (particularly air routes), labour supply, ease of movement and contribution to the economy (in 2016, over 1.5m overnight trips to Belfast, contributing £334m to the economy).**
- **Exploring opportunities to incentivise exports and priorities for trade (e.g. geographically and/or sectorally) to support and develop small business growth post-Brexit.**
- **Consideration of the impact and opportunities of EU funding and any replacement funds to support social, economic and cultural regeneration in the city.**

**3.7 There is currently no clear information available as to how the Committee will select the subject for the inquiry; however, it is likely to be based on the judgement of the committee members, influenced by lobbying and the volume of support for each potential subject area. Therefore the suggested themes at paragraph 3.6 cover a range of areas that the Committee have raised when considering Brexit.**

**3.8 Financial & Resource Implications**

**There are no financial costs for the Council associated with this report.**

### **3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.”**

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor McAteer,  
Seconded by Councillor Boyle,

That the Council’s submission to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee would state:

1. the issues contained within 3.6 within the report;
2. that Belfast City Council had considered a number of motions in favour of:
  - Northern Ireland remaining in the European Union (E.U.);
  - seeking special status for Northern Ireland within the E.U.; and
  - Northern Ireland remaining in the Customs Union and in the Single market,

all of which were subsequently carried;

3. that the Council was extremely concerned to learn of the information contained in the E.U. Exit Analysis Cross-Cabinet Whitehall Briefing, which indicated that the economy of Northern Ireland would be severely impacted by exiting the EU and would experience suppressed economic growth;
4. that the Council expressed concern regarding the loss of a number of E.U. programmes which were specifically focused on targeting social inclusion and the cohesion of communities, particularly through skills and employment, and through the loss of INTERREG programmes; and
5. expressed concern regarding the impact of the hard border.

On a vote by show of hands, ten Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was accordingly declared carried.

### **Markets Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 **To update the Committee on markets including the Christmas Continental Market, St George’s Market and**

**Twilight Markets and the proposed increase in stallage fees  
for St George's Market**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the update on the Christmas Market
- Note the update on the St George's Market and Twilight Markets
- Note and agree the proposal to increase the stallage fee at St George's Market, from £15 to £16 per stall per day, from 1 April 2018 and to increase the stallage fee for hot food concessions from £15 to £25 per stall per day, from 1 April 2018

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Members will be aware that the Spring and Christmas Markets at Belfast City Hall are operated on behalf of the Council by Market Place Europe (MPE). The contract runs from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2019.**

**3.2 This year's Christmas Market took place from 18 November to 23 December 2017. In all, there were 98 stalls. As part of the contract with the Council, there is a requirement for at least 30% of the traders to be local. In reality 34 (33.3%) of the traders at this year's Market were from Belfast or Northern Ireland.**

**3.3 As a result of the removal of the large screen, the Market organisers drew up a revised layout plan for this year's Market. This included the establishment of a Food Court area in the location previously occupied by the large screen. This development has been welcomed by traders and shoppers. It meant that visitors could circulate more easily as there was dedicated seating space for the Food Court. There was also a small performance space with regular performances from local musicians at peak times.**

**3.4 As part of their contractual obligations to the Council, MPE must undertake a bi-annual economic impact survey to assess the economic value of the Market in terms of visitor spend and contribution to the wider city economy.**

**3.5 While MPE are not due to undertake their economic impact survey until after the 2018 Christmas Market, they have undertaken some evaluation based on engagement with a sample of traders and visitors. Traders reported that trade**

increased by 5% on the previous year. They also remarked on an apparent increase in coach tour business – particularly during the week. Finally, traders noted an increase in the number of overseas visitors this year – many of whom also appeared to be visiting the Market as part of an organised tour.

- 3.6 visitors to the Market commented most regularly on the improved layout, the range of new traders and the additional provision for children, including the Helter Skelter. Almost 1000 school children and young adults took part in the Christmas Market Educational Tours which were provided free of charge.
- 3.7 Markets are traditionally a good platform for traders who are starting out in business. The Market experience provides an invaluable opportunity for customer engagement and feedback on the products on offer. Each year, MPE organises a ‘Pitch Perfect’ competition. This provides new local businesses with an opportunity to trade at the Market free of charge. The winners of this year’s competition were Upstyle Originals and The Gift Box. Upstyle Originals, from North Belfast sold upcycled glass bottles that were turned into lamps and ornaments. The Gift Box Company from Newcastle, Co. Down, sold pre-gift boxed Irish products. We also awarded a stall to Outside In, a Social Enterprise company working with the homeless. They sold hats, gloves and sweatshirts. Each product purchased was matched by the company and given to a homeless person.
- 3.8 Members may recall that, for the first time in December 2016, MPE placed new, smaller chalets at the front of the City Hall, just outside the perimeter railings. These were targeted at small food businesses, as part of the 2016 Year of Food and Drink. These units were open to all types of small businesses this year. For the 2018 Market, MPE will work closely with the Council’s Economic Development Team to ensure that local businesses are given the opportunity to trade at the Market.
- 3.9 Members were advised of additional security arrangements at this year’s Market based on engagement with the PSNI. This included additional security personnel at all entrances at peak times as well as random bag searching. There has been no significant adverse reaction to this approach and there were no incidents.
- 3.10 While the MPE report for the 2017 Market was limited in scope (a fuller report is due next year), research undertaken by the Belfast One Business Improvement District (BID) highlights the value of the Christmas Market to the city – and

to other traders in the city centre. According to this research, 100% of those surveyed (sample of traders and city centre users) were aware of the Christmas Market (and 85% were aware of the Spring Continental Market). 75% of respondents felt that the Christmas Market was of significant direct value to Belfast City Centre; 15% felt that it had some direct value, 5% felt that it had some indirect value and 5% felt that it had no value to Belfast. When asked about the impact of the Christmas Market on their business, city centre traders responded as follows: 21% felt that it was of some indirect value and 18% felt that it was of no value to their businesses. All in all, this is a very strong endorsement of the contribution of the Christmas Market to the city and to city centre traders.

3.11 MPE's own economic impact research from the 2016 Christmas Market (carried out by an independent research company) found that more than 1,300,000 people visited the Market over the five week period that it was operational. Almost 25% of the visitors were from outside Northern Ireland. The gross economic impact of the Market in terms of visitor spend at the Market and elsewhere in the city as well as trader spend on food/accommodation while trading at the Market was in excess of £78,000,000. Members will be aware that MPE pays a fixed fee of £80,000 and a percentage of rent from the stalls to the Council for operating the Market and is also contractually obliged to make good all damage to the front lawn by replacing the lawn after the event.

3.12 Work is already underway on plans for the Spring Continental Market (dates are Thursday 24 to Monday 28 May) and for the 2018 Christmas Market. Feedback from traders and Market users will form an important element of the lessons learned in order to inform plans for future events.

3.13 St George's Market and Twilight Market update

St George's award winning Market is going from strength to strength and in 2017 attracted customer numbers of over one million. This is an increase of 20% on 2016. The weekend Market is continuing to grow and recent research conveyed that 66% of customers interviewed cited St George's Market as their main reason for visiting Belfast City Centre. Tourist visitors have also increased into the market by around 20%. In addition the estimated economic impact for the city is £40.9 million a year.

3.14 St George's Market is also now a popular venue for events from Monday to Thursday. In 2017 the venue hosted conferences, exhibitions, youth markets, wedding fairs, as

well as key events such as Digital DNA, NI Science Festival, Generation Innovation, and the extremely popular Twilight Markets.

- 3.15 The original Twilight Market in 2015 was conceived as a means of trying to boost evening trade and economy in the city, as well as to promote our local food and drink industry. It grew from a pilot event to become one of the largest events in the city calendar.
- 3.16 Over 140 traders from the local food and drink industry take part in each event and traders from the restaurant sector and arts and crafts industry are also represented. In addition there are local musicians and local entertainment.
- 3.17 Twilight Market is now firmly 'on the map' in terms of our city's calendar of events. Having received a Tourism NI award in 2016 for Market Innovation, Twilight Market has welcomed over 80,000 visitors since it opened its doors in 2015 and has gone from strength to strength. The Twilight Market is now a two day event and regularly attracts over 25,000 customers to St George's. Planning work is currently underway for the 2018 Twilight Markets. While dates are currently being finalised, it is likely that four events will take place in May, August, November and December. 2018 will also see an increase in other events in the Market with some bookings already in place.
- 3.18 Members have advised that they wish to realise savings in the Council's budget and to increase revenue generation opportunities. In addition to the weekend markets, a new staffing structure with additional front-facing Customer Service and Duty Manager roles means that the team is now equipped to explore new opportunities for increasing income at the Market. In addition to the planned Twilight Markets, there are a number of additional mid-week bookings at St George's Market and the management team are now actively seeking new business opportunities to offset the costs associated with running the Market.
- 3.19 **St George's Market Stall Increase**

At the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 10 February 2016, Members agreed to increase the stall fees at St George's Market by £1, to £15 per stall, with effect from 1 April 2016. It was also agreed that a review of stallage fees, and other potential income sources, would be undertaken with a view to identifying how the fees can support the investment required to sustain the Market into the future.

There has not been an increase in stall fees since that date. 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.

3.20 At present, the Market attracts between 6,000 and 7,500 visitors on each Market day (Friday, Saturday and Sunday). It is now one of the most significant visitor attractions in the city. In the 2017 calendar year, over 1 million people visited the market. In addition to the weekend Markets, St George's hosted three Twilight Markets in 2017 as set out above.

3.21 The current stallage fee of £15 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 £50 per stall per day, and Fine & Dandy Market charges £25 per stall per day.

3.22 It is proposed that the stall fee is increased to £16 per stall per day, with effect from 1 April 2018. It is also proposed that the stallage fee for hot food concessions is increased from £15 to £25 to reflect the additional costs i.e. cleaning and maintenance and its current significant investment in ventilation units.

3.23 Financial and Resource Implications

- Christmas and Spring Continental Markets

The Market operator, MPE, makes a payment to the Council for the operation of the Market. This involves a flat fee and a rate per stall. They also cover all utilities and repairs to the lawn.

- Twilight Markets

A budget of £70,000 has been set aside as part of the budget estimates for 2018/19 and have been included in the cash limit agreed by Members on 10 January 2018 at SP&R Committee.

- St George's Market Stall Increases

This increase of £1 per stall per day, from £15 to £16, will generate an annual increase of approximately £24,100, the increase of stallage fees for hot food concessions from £15 to £25 will generate an additional £30,600, the increased income will be used to offset the running costs of the Market and have

**been already factored into the Revenue Estimates for 2018 / 2019 and have been included in the cash limit agreed by Members at its meeting on 10 January 2018.”**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Mr. P. Lynn and Mr. S. McCann, National Market Traders Federation, were in attendance and had requested to make a short presentation to the Committee. The Committee acceded to the request and the Chairperson welcomed them to the meeting.

Mr. Lynn acknowledged that, while the footfall in St. George’s Market had increased, not all traders were benefitting from the additional visitors. He requested that the Members considered implementing a phased increase in the stallage fees for hot food traders, and suggested that they be increased by £5 per day in the first year and by £10 per day in the second year.

Mr. McCann advised that the increase of 60% would represent a significant increase in his fees.

The Director of Development highlighted to the Committee that the proposed increase for hot food traders was to reflect the additional cleaning and maintenance costs associated with the hot food traders. There was also a need to invest in new ventilation equipment to deal with smoke and odours generated by the hot food traders. The current system had been reviewed by the Council’s health and safety team and they had advised of the need for a new system in order to meet all relevant health and safety obligations. The costs associated with this investment are significant and, in the current financial context, the Council needs to consider how these costs can be met.

During discussion, a number of Members stated that a stepped increase over two years for the hot food traders at St. George’s Market was preferable.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the update on the Christmas Market;
2. noted the update on St George’s Market and the Twilight Markets;
3. noted and agreed to increase the stallage fee at St George’s Market, from £15 to £16 for non-hot food stalls per day, from 1st April 2018; and
4. agreed to increase the stallage fee for hot food concessions from £15 to £20 per hot food stall, per day, from 1st April 2018, and to £25 per hot food stall per day, from 1st April 2019.

### **Belfast City Centre Management Review**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

##### **1.1 The purpose of this report is to:**

- Update Members on the key recommendations from the Review of Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) which was independently completed by consultants Baker Tilly Mooney Moore;
- Approve an approach to support BCCM in their transition towards a commercial model; and
- Consider resource and project planning implications of the proposed transition on the Council.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

### **2.1 Members are asked to:**

- Note the findings of the independent review undertaken by Baker Tilly Mooney Moore Consultants and the planned transition by BCCM towards a commercial model;
- Provide core funding of £95,000 to Belfast City Centre Management and up to £30,000 to cover Project Management costs and technical expertise within the 2018/19 financial year;
- Note that throughout the transition period, dependent on need, the Council may enter into Service Level Agreements (SLAs) / commercial agreements with BCCM to ensure service continuity throughout the transition period, subject to normal procurement procedures.

## **3.0 Main report**

### **3.1 Key Issues**

The review focused on Belfast City Centre Management's (BCCM) Business Plan, its operating model and its alignment to Belfast's strategic and operational context. Baker Tilly Mooney Moore consultants completed the review reporting to a Steering Group with representation from BCCM, Belfast City Council, Department for Communities (DfC) and Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce (BCTC). The key recommendation advocates for BCCM to adopt a self-financing/income generating model.

- 3.2** A robust approach was undertaken to complete the review including consultations with 85 key stakeholders, international city comparisons (Auckland, Copenhagen, Stockholm) and considerable desk research of approaches in other locations and current research and thinking on City Centre Development models. The consultants also undertook an organisational review and analysis including

value for money and definition of remit, role and City Centre Management Services across a number of organisations. As part of the review process, Party Group Briefings were held and there was broad agreement around the key findings and recommendations.

### **3.3 Overview of Key Findings**

The initial findings of the review, which were accepted by all parties, including BCCM Board were:

- The city landscape and operating environment has changed significantly with the Council heavily involved in the development of the City Centre and taking a much more proactive role in this work;
- The strategic context has also changed with the introduction of new policies and strategies guiding city centre design, management and development;
- BCCM provides a good co-ordination role and is well connected to parts of the City Centre. Staff are well engaged and enthusiastic about their roles and the BCCM offer, however there may be a need for a new skills set to deliver the services required in the future. There is a sense that BCCM's relevancy is less than it could or should be and the value of some of its services does not add sufficient value to the City Centre development or management;
- The emergence of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in Belfast has altered the funding and service delivery landscape. BIDs are a common feature in most major cities in the UK and RoI. This change has led to a shift in service delivery and engagement mechanisms in all cities in which BIDs have been introduced. Two Belfast BIDs have been developed (Belfast One and Destination CQ) and a third BID will operate from February 2018 (Belfast Two), bringing further changes to the role of BCCM in supporting City Centre development (Belfast City Centre Map available on [modern.gov](http://modern.gov));
- There is evidence of duplication of services across the City Centre while there are gaps in other areas, principally around support for Council and other partners in developing a strategic approach to City Centre development, taking account of issues such as investment, planning, regeneration and public-private partnerships
- Consultation feedback indicated mixed views on the effectiveness of current arrangements

- The current Board composition is not reflective of the key issues impacting on the City Centre and is largely focused on retail. This does not recognise the changing role and function of the City Centre and the ambition set out by the Council for this area.

#### **3.4 Review Recommendations**

The Review provides examples of services that could be continued as well as those that need to be refreshed, and has highlighted the opportunities for a focused organisation which can make a meaningful contribution to city development. The key recommendations include:

- The preferred option is to create a self-financing option for BCCM. The move towards this way of working will require a change in focus and structure;
- There is a core of services which BCCM could continue to deliver via SLAs and there are opportunities to compete commercially for contracts emerging from traditional funders and from other sources. The Review identified a number of commercial opportunities which a re-configured BCCM would be well positioned to compete for and generate sustainable income;
- A changed operational structure will require a refreshed governance model with associated changes to board membership, staffing roles, focus and responsibilities;
- The consultants developed an outline business case for BCCM Board's consideration as a blueprint for effecting a transition throughout 2018/19
- The Council should phase out its grant funding over the course of 2018/2019 but should be prepared to commit 50% of its existing grant (£95,000) in that financial year.

#### **3.5 Changing roles in the City Centre**

Before BCCM was established, the Council did not have an engagement mechanism to support interaction with Centre Centre businesses and to act as a sounding board on City Centre issues. The changing landscape referred to above reflects wider changes in the Council's approach to City Centre issues. In 2015, Members agreed the first City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy and, since then, the City Centre Development Team has been established to support its development and delivery, including rolling out the £18.7million City Centre Investment Fund (CCIF).

- 3.6 In addition, both the Development Department and the City and Neighbourhood Services Department are directly involved in a range of business support and service delivery functions impacting directly on the City Centre. Likewise, the Financial and Resources Department are collecting the levy for all three Business Improvement Districts.
- 3.7 In parallel to the Council engagement, Belfast Chamber of Commerce is changing its focus to become an advocacy and lobby organisation representing the interests of Belfast businesses – with their membership drawn predominantly from city centre businesses.
- 3.8 The emergence of the BIDs marks the emergence of a new series of strategy and investment partners in the City Centre. Each BID has a mandate from its levy payers to deliver on a series of priority activities that are in addition to core Council and partner services. The Council is a levy payer in all three BIDs and the total annual Council contribution across the three BID areas is around £51,000.
- 3.9 The consultants identified the potential for significant duplication of delivery in the City Centre due to these changes, as well as the changing external environment. Partners were unclear about who was delivering what and the review considered that there was a need to look again at what was being done in order to identify what specific support the Council and its partners needed to provide to support a successful, vibrant City Centre.

3.10 Impact on Services

The recommendations of the review have been broadly accepted within the context of streamlining services, reducing duplication and ensuring efficient and effective delivery. Any changes to the current approach will have an impact on how Council services work with and through BCCM. Appendix 2 (available on modern.gov) sets out the range of services provided by BCCM, the likely impact on Council Services and how Officers will work with BCCM and other partners to mitigate these risks through SLAs or commercial arrangements. Economic Development Unit will be the key interface to support BCCM's transition alongside DFC.

3.11 Financial & Resource Implications

Belfast City Centre Management is a company limited by guarantee and currently employs ten people. Since the

inception of BCCM, the Council has been a key funder (providing £190,000 annually) alongside a funding contribution from DfC and income from SLAs and contracts with BID One and Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

- 3.12 As the Board of BCCM embarks on a new commercial model, the review report recommends that the Council should phase out its core funding over the course of 2018/2019. As a consequence, BCCM's board of directors will need to assess the organisation's liabilities, resources and potential to raise income from other private sources. This work is already underway.
- 3.13 The spirit in which the Board of BCCM has adopted a change in approach is to be commended. In keeping with the review, it is proposed that 50% of the 2018/19 allocation originally set aside within the Development Department budget to support BCCM (£95,000) is allocated to the organisation to support business continuity. To assist in the transition phase, the BCCM Board has approved the recruitment of a Project Manager who will oversee the commercial development and governance changes to the organisation.
- 3.14 It is also recognised that technical professional assistance may be required for HR, legal or marketing advice. In addition to 50% core funding, it is therefore proposed that up to £30,000 is profiled in 2018/19 to support these aspects of the transition (DfC has also agreed to set aside £30,000 for this work). It is important to note that, during the transition phase, commercial contracts may be put in place with BCCM to carry out specific elements of work, subject to normal procurement procedures. This financial commitment will be met from 2018/19 Economic Development budgets.
- 3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no specific equality or good relations implications."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### Strategic and Operational

#### Belfast City Marathon

(Mr. G. Copeland, City Events Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The City Events Manager outlined to the Committee that Belfast City Marathon Limited (Ltd.) had advised the Council of its proposed changes to the city's marathon

course and for the event to be staged on a Sunday, instead of May Day, from 2019 onwards.

He reminded the Members that Belfast City Marathon Ltd. was a free-standing, legally constituted organisation which had no legal connection to the Council other than funding arrangements. He explained that the Council funded the Marathon through the City Events Unit's budget, where the contribution for the 2018 event was £26,000.

He reported to the Committee that, over the last 36 years, the marathon had used various routes throughout the City and, given its increased popularity, that there had been calls from the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce for the Marathon to be held on a Sunday. He explained that the recent request for the event to be moved to a Sunday was due to the level of traffic disruption created on what was now an important day in the retail calendar.

The City Events Manager advised the Members that a new route had also been proposed for the marathon, which included key iconic locations across the city.

He explained that the Belfast City Marathon Ltd had requested the Council's support for the new route and the change of day which would see the event taking place on Sunday, 5th May, 2019 and then annually on the Sunday of the first May Bank Holiday weekend.

It was highlighted to the Committee that Belfast City Marathon Ltd intended to consult widely on the proposed new course and on the move to a Sunday. He advised that the consultation would include stakeholders and the various places of worship which would be affected by the new course both directly and indirectly.

The City Events Manager outlined that Belfast City Marathon Ltd had advised that the timeframe in which to develop and deliver the proposed changes would need to be implemented 12 months in advance of the 2019 event taking place.

During discussion, a number of Members expressed concerns in relation to the proposed new route, particularly that the Ormeau Road had been almost entirely removed. A number of Members stated that the change would have a detrimental economic impact on the traders along the Ormeau Road, which had historically been an area of the course with a high number of supporters. A further Member stated that the route within the north of the city was disappointing.

In relation to the proposed change of day, a Member expressed some concerns in relation to the number of churches which would be impacted along the route. He stated that there were other churches which were not listed within the report which would need to be consulted about the proposed changes to the day and the route.

A number of Members suggested that Belfast City Marathon Ltd. be invited in to discuss the proposed changes at a future Committee meeting.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. agreed that it would reserve its position on the proposed changes to the Belfast City Marathon at this stage;
2. agreed that Belfast City Marathon Limited be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the proposed changes to both the route and the day;
3. agreed that it would consider its position on the proposed changes after the public consultation had concluded; and
4. noted that the Belfast City Marathon Limited was a free standing, legally constituted organisation that had no legal connection to Belfast City Council, other than funding arrangements.

### **Proposed Committee Planning Workshop**

The Director of City Centre Development advised the Members that a second Workshop, which was proposed to be held on 28th March, was no longer deemed necessary and that, instead, it was proposed that the Workshop which was scheduled for 21st February would incorporate all elements of the Committee Plan for 2018/2019, including a focus on Employability and Skills as previously agreed.

The Committee agreed to the course of action as outlined.

Chairperson