Development Committee

Tuesday, 15th April, 2014

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairman);
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Stalford);
Alderman Ekin; and
Councillors Austin, Beattie, Convery,
Garrett, Keenan, Kelly, Kingston, Kyle,
Magee, Mac Giolla Mhín, Ó Donnghaile,
Reynolds, Spence and Webb.

In attendance: Mr. J. McGrillen, Director of Development;
Ms. C. Taggart, Community Services Manager; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Stoker and Councillors Kennedy and Verner.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18th March 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 April, subject to the amendment of the minute under the heading 'Eurocities – Update' to reflect that, in addition to the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman having been authorised to attend the Eurocities Annual Conference in Munich in November, the Committee had authorised also a representative of each of the remaining political parties to attend the conference.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of item 4(h) viz., 'Ulster Orchestra - Lease at the Ulster Hall', Councillors Magee and Spence declared interests in that they were members of the Board of the Ulster Orchestra.

Smithfield and Union

The Committee agreed to receive, at its meeting in June, a presentation from representatives of the Smithfield and Union area in respect of its campaign to be afforded recognition as a formal Quarter within Belfast.

Tourism Strategy

The Committee noted the contents of a presentation by Mr. T. Stephens, which outlined the scope and remit of the review of the Tourism Strategy which he would be undertaking on behalf of the Council. It was noted that further progress reports on the review would be submitted in due course.

European Sport Tourism Summit

Arising from discussion on the Council's future Tourism Strategy, the Director reported that the inaugural European Sport Tourism Summit would take place at the Thomond Stadium, Limerick, on 15th May. He indicated that the event would explore a range of issues relating to the economic benefits which could be realised by major cities in the hosting of sporting events. He outlined the programme for the event and gave an overview of the speakers who would be addressing the delegates. He indicated that, since the City would be hosting the Giro d'Italia in May and given that Belfast was potentially one of the cities which might host games in the event of the Rugby World Cup returning to the British Isles, it would be of benefit if the Committee was represented at the Summit.

The Committee agreed to authorise the attendance at the Summit of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman, together with the Director (or their nominees).

Grosvenor Recreation Centre

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Background Information

1.1 The Council entered into a new 10 year lease for Grosvenor Recreation Centre with Roden Street Community Development Group (RSCDG) from 1 April 2014. Due to high usage figures, the existing shower and changing facilities at the centre require upgrading to effectively meet the needs of the physical activity providers in the area, such as users of the 3G pitches, local schools, women's groups, centre users etc.

1.3 To help sustain the high level of services currently provided at Grosvenor Recreation Centre, RSCDG are working with DCAL to secure additional investment to refurbish key areas of the centre. Firm plans have now been developed and relate to the refurbishment of the showers and changing rooms in a single storey extension and refurbishment of the weights room.

1.4 Property Care has confirmed that any planned maintenance for the centre could be carried out in quarters 3 and 4 to coincide with the work on the proposed extension. They have also confirmed they do not foresee that the extra work will create any additional demands on the maintenance budget.

2 Key Issues

2.1 This project will enhance the Centre by increasing the quality of both the changing facilities and the weights room. The former is especially required due to the increased demands from users of the 3G pitch and centre users.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 The total cost of £250,000 will be met by DCAL with the work being carried out by the end of the 14/15 financial year. Estates Management has reassessed the rent and it will rise by £425.00 to £18,525.00 per annum. As the grant is paid net of rent the amount RSCDG receive will remain the same.

It was reported that Ms. C. Mack, Roden Street Community Development Group, together with Mr. K. Kelly, consultant architect, were in attendance to outline the principal aspects of the proposed refurbishment and they were admitted to the meeting and welcomed by the Chairman. Ms. Mack indicated that, on completion, the enhancement to the centre would provide additional community space and improve the quality of service for the users of the facility. Mr. Kelly provided an overview of the physical and structural changes which would be made to the building and answered a range of Members' questions in respect thereof.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that, at its meeting on 25th April, under the circumstances as set out under Standing Order 46, it would authorise the undertaking of the extension work to the Grosvenor Recreation Centre.

Opportunities for Investment

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

Background Information

1.1 The Council recently commissioned a report on barriers to investment in Belfast. This work was undertaken by Mike Smith and Denis Rooney. That report was based on a stakeholder engagement exercise which identified the types of barriers – perceived and real – experienced by investors in Belfast. They also considered the investment criteria used by some major global organisations when choosing locations. Furthermore they considered key stakeholder actions to improve the attractiveness of Belfast to investors.

1.3 An outline of the report was presented to the party leaders and their representatives at a meeting hosted by the Lord Mayor on 26 February 2014. Following discussion, it was agreed that a report be brought to the Development

Committee to identify a number of action points arising from the work and to consider possible ways forward.

2 Key Issues

2.1 The Rooney Smith report, as presented to the Elected Members at the end of February 2014 was entitled 'Opportunities for Investment'. This reflected the focus on identifying the required organisational shift as well as the potential to exploit the city's key strengths in order to increase the volume of investment.

2.2 The report involved an interpretation of interviews and questionnaires undertaken with 27 key individuals and organisations that were directly or indirectly involved in encouraging and supporting investment in Belfast. These included representative bodies (e.g. CBI, IoD), government departments with city centre responsibility, financial organisations, property developers, private equity institutions and key experts such as economists. Key questions asked were:

1. **List what you think are the positive aspects about Belfast which encourage investment**
2. **List what you think are the most negative aspects which discourage investment**
3. **List any policy initiatives which the city council and/or statutory agencies could do to encourage investment**
4. **List any key development projects which need to be prioritised in the city**
5. **List any initiatives which you have witnessed in other cities and which should be considered in Belfast.**

2.3 In response to question 1 regarding the positive aspects supporting investment, responses focused on the competitive cost base, the skilled workforce, quality of life and good transport connections.

2.4 The issue which had the most negative impact on investment was identified as community tensions and unrest, followed by lack of a single political leader for the city, difficulties in accessing finance, delays within the planning system and lack of skills relevant to business requirements (interestingly seen as both negative and positive).

2.5 **With regard to policy initiatives that should be accelerated, responses focused on the opportunities presented by enterprise zones (which are now a potential option for Belfast to pursue, given the recent designation of an enterprise zone in Coleraine). This was followed by greater collaborative promotional campaigns for the city as well as a reduction in corporation tax.**

2.6 **When asked which development projects needed to be prioritised in the city, responses focused on Royal Exchange, followed by University of Ulster and Titanic Quarter.**

2.7 **Finally, with regard to which other cities were seen as examples of good practice, Manchester was identified by most respondents, followed by Edinburgh, Chicago, Glasgow and Barcelona.**

2.8 **In their summary of the responses, Smith and Rooney suggested that the key areas where Belfast needed further work included addressing the collective attitude to risk – particularly in the public sector. This has a knock-on effect on private investor confidence. They also considered that there was work to do to explore how a more coordinated approach to dealing with investor enquiries could be established among those agencies responsible for this work. While the public agencies involved in this activity considered that the current approach worked well, private sector representatives questioned felt that it was somewhat uncoordinated. As an extension of this point, they felt that there was some work to do to improve collaboration and engagement between the public and private sectors. While they acknowledged that this was happening to some extent, they considered that there was an opportunity for a more informed and strategic dialogue to help shape the city's economic future and maximise opportunities for growth.**

2.9 **In addition, they suggested that the lack of lending was continuing to impact negatively on business growth and investment. They noted that there was an opportunity – with the expansion of UU in Belfast – to create an improved engagement with the two city universities. Finally, they suggested that local government reform will place the Council in a much stronger position than is currently the case, giving it a more pivotal role to play in generating investment in the future.**

2.10 **Rooney and Smith identified the main criteria used by key global organisations in identifying preferred investment**

locations. These included: good operating environment; cost competitive operating structures; low political/economic risk; good education system; good labour pool with the ability to scale up; good IP/data security; good government incentives; good physical and IT infrastructure; efficient, non-bureaucratic government.

2.11 They noted the importance of external (FDI) investment not only in creating jobs but also in trying to rebalance the public/private sector employment ratios in the city and improving wage levels.

2.12 Taking account of the research findings, Rooney and Smith made a number of recommendations around practical actions that might be undertaken to address the issues identified. One of the key lessons emerging was the importance of Belfast standing out from the rest and focusing on its key strengths – where these existed – as well as identifying those areas of challenge where more work is required to improve the offer. In this regard, they pointed to the investment approach undertaken by a number of key cities and demonstrated how a focused approach was beginning to pay dividends for these locations.

2.13 In order to help Members agree priority actions arising from this work, it is recommended that we engage with OCO – a local company that works on behalf of multiple global economic development agencies including UKTI and World Bank. We could invite the company Chief Executive to attend a future meeting of the Development Committee to illustrate the approach undertaken by other locations and to help Members consider how the city, collectively, can work to maximise investment and economic growth by taking a focused approach to this work.

5 <u>Recommendations</u>

- **Note the key findings of the recent work undertaken by Mike Smith and Denis Rooney on 'opportunities for investment in Belfast'**

- **Invite a representative from OCO to illustrate the approach undertaken by other locations to attract investment and to help members identify priority actions required to maximise investment and economic growth in the city."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

European Social Fund – Match Funding and HARTE Programme

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that European Social Fund (ESF) Priority 1 provides financial support to promote training and other activities to assist long term unemployed people obtain sustainable employment. ESF projects are funded through the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) and is subject to the agreed match funding being in place. Successful projects are allocated funding on condition that they can provide 35% match funding from another public sector source. Match funding must be secured on an annual basis.

1.2 At the March meeting, Members agreed to provide match funding to six ESF projects for 2014-2015. Members will recall that East Belfast Mission (EBM) had not submitted a match funding request to Belfast City Council but if forthcoming it was agreed that it would be presented to a future meeting of Development Committee for consideration. EBM has now submitted a match funding request for Jobs4u for 2014-2015.

1.3 HARTE
Following an open procurement exercise, Time Associates was awarded the contract for the Council's HARTE (Hospitality and Retail Training and Employment) Programme in November 2011. The tender was for the achievement of defined targets up to March 2014. DEL subsequently offered a one year extension to the funded projects as well as a 25% uplift in the budgets for year 3 (last year) and year four (2014-2015). The Development Committee previously agreed the extension to the project.

2 Key Issues

2.1 East Belfast Mission (EBM) - Jobs4u Project
The midterm progress report received from EBM (to end September 2013) shows the project engaged with 84 participants out of an annual target of 212. 25 people moved into employment against a target of 53, seven people completed a qualification against a target of 42 and 84 people engaged in job search activities against a target of 170.

2.2 Provisional figures (up to mid-March 2014) indicate 195 people were registered out of a 212 target, 52 people got jobs against a target of 53, 38 people completed a qualification against a target of 42 and 195 people engaged in job search activities

against a target of 170. Targets have improved compared with the other quarters following a re-focusing of resources to the project. A recent review of operating procedures has identified additional outreach opportunities to work closely with community partners and better engage with local long-term unemployed people as a means of ensuring that targets for the coming year are met.

2.3 In the coming year, the Jobs4u project will again aim to support 212 people, assist 53 people into employment and 42 people to complete qualifications and engage 170 people in job search activities.

2.4 The total project cost of the Jobs4u programme is £190,253 for the 2014/2015 financial year. The organisation is requesting match-funding support of £12,485 from Belfast City Council. The other funding sources are DEL/ESF (£123,665); other DEL match (£15,312 - currently being applied for) and East Belfast Mission (£38,791).

2.5 <u>HARTE</u>
Given that the original contract between Belfast City Council and Time Associates was scheduled to come to an end in April 2014, officers have taken advice from Central Procurement Services on the implications of extending this contract in order to deliver the final year of the programme, following DEL's funding extension.

2.6 As part of this process, a value for money assessment of Time Associates' original contract to March 2014 for achievement of the HARTE project targets was undertaken. Time Associates' proposed costs for the extended project period (to March 2015) were also reviewed. The European Social Fund Promoter's Operating Manual guidance on subcontracting requires project promoters to follow Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) guidelines for purchases of direct items in excess of £200. Officers have therefore applied a CPD test to the proposed revised contract.

2.7 The findings of the exercise above are:

- **Over the current contract the Council has received good value for money from Time Associates. The original tender price was £410,336 and the actual amount paid to the contractor was £404,741. The original target of 188 participants was exceeded by 16 and the supplier delivered one further programme/workshop. Therefore the contract has cost less than the tender price and the original**

targets upon which the tender was based have been exceeded

- **The cost schedule submitted by Time Associates for the period 1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015 is £119,585. In most instances costs are straight line projection of rates from Time Associates' original tender. The costs are also proportionate when considered against the targets in the original tender. In instances where costs are not straight line projections there is a clear rationale mostly influenced by DEL as the funder. The costs are in line with the overall letter of offer received by the Council from DEL – the maximum value of the contract is £142,000, based on the Council's match funding commitment of £25,000 in cash and £10,000 in kind (therefore a total cash value of £132,000).**

- **The CPD test applied by officers concluded that the economic balance of the contract has not changed in favour of the contractor in a matter not provided for in the terms of the initial contract.**

2.8 A further consideration of this contractual matter is that DEL will not be in a position to extend the timescale beyond March 2015 for achievement of the outputs. Therefore if the Council did not agree to the extension of the current contract, both the ESF funds and potential economic impacts would be lost.

5 <u>Recommendations</u>

- **To agree to the match funding request of £12,485 for the Jobs4u project at East Belfast Mission**
- **To agree an addendum to the Time Associates contract for achievement of a further year's targets for the HARTE project to March 2015 at a total value of £119,585, subject to agreement by DEL."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

<u>Integrated Economic Strategy - Update</u>

At the request of the Director, the Committee agreed to defer, to its meeting in June, consideration of the above-mentioned item in order for more information to be obtained.

Northern Ireland Connected Health Alliance

The Director informed the Committee that the Northern Ireland Connected Health Alliance would be hosting a meeting in the City Hall on 23rd September. He reported that the event, which would be attended by representatives from a range of councils across Northern Ireland, would discuss issues regarding the use of technology to promote public health and well-being. In addition, subjects such as transforming care in the home, wealth creation within the Health and Social Care Services and European funding opportunities would be explored by the 150 delegates. He outlined the aims and objectives of the Connected Health Alliance and indicated that the hosting in the City Hall of the meeting would provide a valuable opportunity for networking and he added that each Member of the Committee would be invited to attend the event.

The Committee agreed to contribute a sum of £3,000 to cover the costs associate with providing hospitality at the event.

Belfast Bursary Awards - Update and Request

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that Belfast City Council made funding available through the Investment Programme for the Achieve: Belfast Bursary Fund. The Fund is administered through Belfast Metropolitan College (Belfast Met) and the Prince's Trust. Hundreds of young people are supported in the city to take part in further education and training and to improve their employment prospects.

1.2 The Prince's Trust bursary (with funding allocated through the charity's Development Awards programme) is open to young people aged 16-25 residing in the city who are not in education, training or employment. The scheme aims to help recipients overcome barriers which may prevent them from undertaking training and education or moving into employment. The fund is in the second year of operation.

1.3 At Belfast Met, full-time students who began their first year of study, who are resident in the Council area, aged between 16-24 years and whose annual household income is £23,820 or less were eligible to apply for grants of up to £500. This fund applies to students on recognised courses at levels 2-5 in future growth sectors including IT, multimedia, renewable energies, science, tourism and hospitality.

2 Key Issues

2.1 Prince's Trust Development Awards

The Prince's Trust provided an update on the bursary fund supported in the second year of the programme (2013-14):

- **232 young people aged 16-25 years were supported against the original target of 202 - 15% higher than the original target**
- **The majority of bursary fund recipients were aged 17-21 years old**
- **93% of young people achieve a positive outcome against a target of 80%, including moving into employment (39%), education or training (69%). The average award was £171**
- **165 awards (71%) were provided to young people in the Belfast City Council area who live in the top 10% of most deprived wards**
- **193 awards (83%) were provided to young people living in the top 25% of most deprived wards in Northern Ireland**
- **The highest percentage of bursary fund recipients (68%) used the fund to pay for equipment for construction-related skills, cookery, hairdressing and mechanics, followed by 23% who used the fund to pay for course fees.**

2.2 The Prince's Trust's experience in running the Development Awards shows that support is needed most by young people up to age of 25 to help them achieve a positive outcome. The fund continues to support young people who are not in education, employment or training, typically working towards level 1 or 2 qualifications. As well as being a priority group in the Council's Investment programme, young people aged 16-24 continue to be a key priority of the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL). The most recent claimant count statistics issued by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI) show that almost 25% of those claiming unemployment benefits are aged 18-24.

2.3 In the coming year, the Prince's Trust aims to deliver 313 Development Awards in the Belfast City Council area - 12% higher than the number of awards provided in 2013-14. Based on this year's figures, these awards could help 122 young people to find employment as well as supporting 216 bursary recipients to undertake education or training that will improve their chances of finding a job. The budget for the awards will be £50,000. Prince's Trust have again asked if the Council will

consider a contribution towards the organisational resource required to promote and manage this scheme: as with the contribution last year, they have asked for an amount of £9,484 towards programme administration.

2.4 <u>Belfast Metropolitan College – progress report</u>
In the 13/14 academic year, Belfast Met reported that 64 students availed of the bursary. Spend on the awards amounted to £32,000 (£500 per bursary). A total of 120 students applied for the scheme, of whom 64 were successful and 56 failed to meet one or more of the eligibility criteria set.

2.5 Of the successful students, over a third of Achieve awards (24) have been provided to young people in Belfast City Council area who live in the top 10% of most deprived wards in Northern Ireland while over half of the 64 Achieve awards have been provided to young people in Belfast City Council area who live in the top 25% most deprived wards.

2.6 One of the most significant challenges has been to predict the number of students who will apply for and be eligible to take up the BMC bursary, given that this programme is targeted at first year students on approved courses. While there is a pool of over 800 students undertaking the priority courses agreed by Members, only around 8% of those met all the scheme's eligibility criteria.

2.7 At the December 2013 meeting of the Development Committee, Members were advised of the number of applicants for the BMC bursary and they considered how the original targets might be met, while maintaining the focus of the bursary. Following that meeting, it was agreed that a report would be brought back to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to consider implications of changing the scheme criteria, for example lifting the age limit or amending target courses.

2.8 In anticipation of the Committee's decision on the criteria, and in order to increase awareness of the scheme among the target audience, a detailed engagement plan has been developed to promote the scheme. This includes promoting the scheme to the following key conduits:

- **Welfare rights advisors in advice sector to ensure those who need help the most have an opportunity to apply**
- **Targeted engagement through existing community networks and outlets**

- **Organisations on the Council's Section 75 consultee list. This is particularly important in widening participation among younger people's groups and disability specialist groups**
- **Targeted use of both the Council's and on Belfast Met's website (including on the online prospectus and at open days and via media)**
- **Schools' career advisers in order to ensure that young people are aware of the financial incentive when making their choice of course.**

3 <u>Resource Implications</u>

3.1 The financial resource required to deliver 313 bursaries through the Prince's Trust in the coming financial year will be £50,000. In addition, the organisation is seeking a contribution of £9,484 towards the management and administration resources associated with the scheme. The future report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee will identify the resources required for the Belfast Met scheme, subject to the implications of changing the eligibility criteria.

5 <u>Recommendations</u>

- **Note the progress in the Achieve bursary, administered by both Belfast Met and Prince's Trust**
- **Agree to the request from Prince's Trust for £50,000 to deliver 313 awards in the coming financial year, as well as a request for £9,484 towards scheme management and administration**
- **Note the intention to take a report to the future meeting of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to consider potential amendments to the guidelines for the scheme managed by Belfast Met."**

During discussion, the Director provided an overview of the review of the eligibility criteria for the bursary fund and indicated also that he would submit information to a Member in respect of a Section 75 breakdown of those applicants who had applied and had been successful for assistance under the scheme.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

<u>City Sightseeing Tour Provision</u>

The Director reminded the Committee that one of the three companies which had been licensed to provide a coach sight-seeing service in the City had ceased to operate earlier in the year. He reported that officers from the Council had attended a multi-agency meeting at which the number of licences required for the City had been considered. Accordingly, it had been agreed that it would be necessary to undertake a

piece of research to ascertain the future demand for the service. That study would enable a recommendation to be made to the Driver and Vehicle Agency regarding the number of tour operator licenses appropriate for Belfast.

Discussion ensued during which the view was expressed that issues such as the establishment of a code of conduct for tour guide providers would need to be addressed as part of any study.

The Committee agreed that a sum of £4,000 be allocated towards the commissioning of a study as outlined.

Coach Parking in Belfast

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Relevant Background Information

1.1 Coach Tourism is an important market for Belfast City. Cities across the UK and Europe have looked at coach tourism and tried to put in place infrastructure to support it. Edinburgh generates nearly £40m a year from coach-based tourism and in Bristol up to 40% of tourists visiting local attractions arrive by coach.

1.2 It is difficult to quantify the exact economic return from coach tourism in Belfast but it is an important part of the business mix for many visitor attractions and hotels. It is business that typically can be attracted during mid-week and shoulder seasons.

1.3 Officers have been working with other agencies to enhance the drop off and pick up provision across the City. The provision has improved over the past number of years, but still has the scope to be enhanced.

1.4 The availability of secure overnight coach parking has been raised as an issue by the chairman of the Coach Tourism & Transport Council of Ireland. This organisation is the industry body for the leading coach operators in the Republic of Ireland bringing International visitors to Belfast.

1.5 The Chairman has indicated that a number of coaches have been damaged while parked in lay-bys and at the side of the road. The need for secure overnight coach parking in Belfast has been raised by a number of other organisations involved in tourism including tour guiding groups, various hoteliers and industry bodies.

1.7 This has been echoed by Visit Belfast staff that are selling Belfast in the market place and are frequently asked by coach/tour operators regarding the provision of this type of facility. At a recent presentation to Committee the Access Study report indicated that coach parking was required within the City. An independent report during one evening last summer recorded 70 visiting coaches within the City boundaries.

1.10 Members will recall that there was the provision for overnight coach parking provided in Corporation Street, on land owned by the Harbour Commissioners. This was managed by the Industry body for Coach Operators in Northern Ireland, the Federation for Passenger Transport. This ultimately wasn't successful for a number of reasons; namely the volume of coaches wasn't as anticipated; it wasn't a commercially viable operation rather a service for coach operators, so the Federation couldn't afford to sustain the monthly rental payments and the ticketing of coaches illegally parked across the City wasn't enforced.

2 <u>Key Issues</u>

2.1 There has been a strong lobby from various organisations across the City and from the key Coach Industry Body in the Republic of Ireland bringing International visitors to Belfast highlighting the need for secure overnight Coach Parking.

2.2 It is clear that 2012 including the opening of Titanic Belfast has made Belfast a high profile destination. Titanic Belfast in particular has been a huge draw for visiting coaches to Belfast. This increase in coach traffic is a test for the City's infrastructure to handle this type of traffic.

2.3 DRD acknowledge that this has a knock on effect for traffic flow, particularly in and around the City centre. Coach parking would appear to be inadequate to cope with the increase in demand.

2.5 If this is not addressed it could have an impact on the City as a destination for coach tourism. It is estimated that a maximum provision of overnight parking for up to 60 visiting coaches is provided to cope with the summer peaks. This will be less in the shoulder and winter months. The coach parking would also be available to coaches from Northern Ireland visiting Belfast.

2.8 Officers have looked at the Council's portfolio of land and nothing is suitable to meet this requirement. Officers have

also spoken to Translink regarding the use of space in their depots and facilities but again this is not possible. Various sites across the City have been explored and the ideal site has been identified as a plot of land over ½ acre owned by the Harbour Commissioners. Coach Operators would pay a nominal fee for the use of the site on a 12 or 24 hour basis.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 It is estimated that the rental cost for the site will be £2,000 per month. It is proposed that the Federation of Passenger Transport as the Industry Body for Northern Ireland will manage the facility with a Service Level Agreement.

3.2 The Federation of Passenger Transport have equipment in storage including CCTV equipment, electronic key pads, maintenance equipment for coaches that they will make available for the site at no cost to Council. To purchase this equipment from new would cost circa £20,000.

3.3 The Federation will provide insurance for the site and work with The Harbour Commissioners. In return the Federation will receive income from overnight rentals. It is estimated that this will be circa £2,000-£3,000 per annum.

3.4 As the service is not commercially viable and the Federation is the Industry body for Northern Ireland, Legal Services are content that this is a single tender action.

3.5 In order that coach parking as specified is successful a promotional/sales effort will be necessary. The Federation of Passenger Transport, Coach Tourism and Transport Council and Visit Belfast will provide this sales focus.

5 Recommendations

1. **To agree to a trial period of one year, with a view to a rolling three year period**
2. **A agree that a budget of £25,000 is allocated per annum, up to a maximum of three years, subject to annual review to support this initiative.**
3. **That a Service Level Agreement is put in place with the Federation of Passenger Transport.**
4. **That further discussions be pursued at officer level."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Ulster Orchestra - Lease at Ulster Hall

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it endorses a variation to the 2009 Lease Agreement with the Ulster Orchestra to enable it to rent an extra office at the Ulster Hall at an additional cost of £385.25 per month.

City Events Action Plan

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the above-mentioned Action Plan to its meeting in June to enable it to be considered within the context of the Council's revised Tourism Strategy.

Mr. Carl Frampton

Arising from discussion, a Member referred to the recent successes of the local super-bantamweight boxer Mr. Carl Frampton and pointed out that negotiations were ongoing to secure a world title fight for Mr. Frampton in Belfast. He suggested that, if such a bout was to take place in the City, the Council should seek to avail of the opportunity which would be afforded to promote Belfast to a worldwide sporting audience. In addition, the Council might consider supporting the event by providing the use of the Ulster Hall for the purposes of a weigh-in, or that the City Hall might be considered appropriate for the hosting of a press conference.

The Committee endorsed the Member's comments.

World Pipe Band Championships

With the permission of the Chairman, the Director reported that he had been advised earlier that day that the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association had indicated that it wished to switch the venue of the World Pipe Band Championships, which were due to take place in May in the Ormeau Park, to the Civil Service Sports Grounds on the Upper Newtownards Road. He added that such a decision had been deemed necessary by the prevailing ground conditions at the Ormeau Park.

After discussion, during which the Director agreed to liaise with the organisers regarding the feasibility of promotional performances being staged throughout Belfast, or having the event broadcast within the grounds of the City Hall, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

United States Technical Mission 2014

The Committee considered the undernoted:

"1 Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that the Council recently supported the Belfast Tech Mission which took place in October 2013. This was the first business mission led by Council to the west coast of America.

1.2 **The mission provided an opportunity for 20 companies to travel to San Francisco and San Jose to showcase and network with leading companies, investors and venture capitalists from the west coast of America. The mission targeted Belfast-based digital media, software and hi-tech IT companies who offer a globally focused product or service and were considering expansion or increasing sales and investment opportunities in the west coast area.**

1.3 **The mission achieved a number of significant successes including:**

- **One company who surpassed its Kickstarter £100,000 fundraising target during the mission**
- **One company announced a new $800,000 funding round**
- **One company established a partnership with PayPal and will roll out their software in the US in 2014**
- **One company secured 5 new US based clients while another secured its first US client as a result of meetings that took place during the mission.**

1.4 **A number of other participating companies have also secured additional investment in their companies since returning from the mission through crowd funding campaigns and business angel investment.**

1.5 **Due to the positive feedback received from participating companies as well as subsequent discussions with Invest Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Science Park, it is clear that an opportunity exists to support another tech mission in November/December 2014, as a collaborative event with those organisations.**

2 **<u>Key Issues</u>**

2.1 **Based on the success of the 2013 tech mission, Northern Ireland Science Park and stakeholders in the Northern Ireland tech community have recommended that the mission becomes an annual event and that NISP, Belfast City Council and key partners such as the University of Ulster, Queen's University and Invest Northern Ireland, combine to organise a joint tech mission to Southern California.**

2.2 **In 2014, NISP CONNECT launches INVENT, an evolution of the 25K Awards, which, for the first time, will be open to the public as well as NI's HE research institutions. INVENT aims to identify the new product inventions with the highest commercial potential in six categories: electronics, creative media and consumer internet, enterprise software, agrifood, engineering and life and health sciences. INVENT category winners will be supported by NISP to travel to the west coast**

of America as part of the tech mission and will take part in up to 10 meetings in a number of west coast locations.

2.3 As with the 2014 mission, Council will help in generating contacts and business leads through our existing networks and those provided through the partner organisations. A showcase, pitching sessions and a series of one to one meetings will be organised, providing a platform from which local companies can target key businesses and potential clients based in the United States, with the aim of securing new business.

2.4 It is intended that this trade mission will become an annual event and will be built into the support ecosystem for hi-tech and growth focused businesses in Belfast. It will help them explore new markets and develop collaboration with US-based partners. It may also offer an opportunity to explore the potential for residencies for the companies within incubators and workspace on the west coast, and to develop linkages with those incubators so that exchanges can be explored, for example, when the Belfast Creative Hub is operational.

2.5 It is proposed the Council's contribution to the trade mission will be up to a maximum of £30,000. If agreement can be secured from all the partners, Council officers will work with Invest NI, NISP and the universities to develop a targeted programme of meetings and showcase events and to recruit local businesses to take part in the event. While the details are still being finalised, it is likely that the event will take place towards the end of November/start December 2014.

2.6 Given that the Lord Mayor led the 2013 Tech Mission, it is proposed that there is also civic engagement in the 2014 event, in order to ensure continuity and to demonstrate civic commitment to this venture.

3 <u>Resource Implications</u>

3.1 Up to £30,000 required to support the mission.

5 <u>Recommendations</u>

Members are asked to:

- **Note the proposal to develop and implement a trade mission to the west coast of America in partnership with NISP, Invest NI and HE partners in November/December 2014**

- **To approve a total budget of up to £30,000 to support the trade mission**
- **To approve the participation in the event of the Lord Mayor/relevant elected representatives."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

South by Southwest 2014

The Committee was apprised of the key outcomes of the South by Southwest Conference which had taken place in Austin, Texas, in March. The Director outlined the range of key contacts which the Council's delegation had engaged with and noted that officers would continue to liaise with local partners to discuss how a collective approach to attending in the conference in 2015 might prove to be more beneficial, particularly in the promotion of the City as a viable destination for the film-making industry.

Noted.

United States Inward Delegations

The Committee noted the contents of two update reports which provided an overview of the inward investment missions to Belfast by delegates from New Brunswick/New Jersey, which had taken place from 15th till 17th January; and the American Ireland Fund, which had taken place from 25th till 28th February.

Eurocities Social Affairs – Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

2 Key Issues

2.1 In February 2013 the European Commission published the "Social Investment Package (SIP)". It is important to note that this is not a new funding stream but rather a policy instrument to enable Europe to re-orientate its social policy. By this, it means:

- **Maintaining social investment throughout the individual's life;**
- **Pursuing, activating and enabling policies by including more people into the labour market; and**
- **Increasing the sustainability and adequacy of social systems.**

2.3 In response to this policy initiative, EUROCITIES developed in June 2013, a policy statement which was submitted to the European Commission. This statement highlighted the fact that cities are responsible for delivering the majority of the public services and are often the first ones to respond to

emerging social problems. It asserted that the success of SIP can only be achieved through a strong multi-level partnership, involving cities directly, and improved coordination.

2.4 The recent Social Affairs Forum meeting in Barcelona focussed on how cities can facilitate and contribute to these European objectives and included a politicians' panel. Alderman Bob Stoker represented the Council along with counterparts from 14 other European cities to stress cities' fundamental role in social policy. Alderman Stoker presented a position paper which was endorsed by the panel, which will be integrated into original EUROCITIES statement and taken back to its Executive Committee for endorsement.

2.5 The fact that Alderman Stoker's paper was debated and agreed is a significant output and cements Belfast's role as an active participant in European Affairs. Indeed as a result of this process, Alderman Stoker has since been invited by the European Commission to attend the Social Policy Innovation Conference in Brussels on 19-20 May 2014. This is an extremely high level, invite only event at which the Commissioner will speak, and will be of great benefit to Belfast to attend. It is therefore recommended that Members approve the attendance of Alderman Stoker and a European Officer at this event to continue to represent and profile the work of Belfast in this highly relevant and topical area.

2.6 An additional output from the Barcelona meeting was agreement to establish a SIP Taskforce. EUROCITIES is presently seeking best practice examples from cities to demonstrate their contribution to socially inclusive cities. The network will then select 10-12 cities who will participate in the Taskforce. EU funds are available to support their participation in a defined set of activity to maintain this lobby with the European Institutions over the next year.

3 <u>Resource Implications</u>

3.1 The maximum cost of attendance by Alderman Stoker and an EU Officer at the EU Commission event in May 2014 will not exceed £2,400 and this is budgeted for within the annual EU Unit EUROCITIES activity budget.

4 <u>Recommendations</u>

4.1 To note the substantial contribution made to the EUROCITIES Statement on the Social Investment Package.

4.2 To approve the attendance of Alderman Bob Stoker and an EU Officer at the above mentioned conference and to approve associated expenditure in the amount of £2,400 to facilitate travel, accommodation and subsistence.

4.3 To note that Belfast will apply to participate in the SIP Taskforce."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

New York/New Belfast Conference

The Committee was advised that the Belfast Media Group and the Irish Echo would be hosting the fourth 'New York/New Belfast - One City Conference' at Fordham University, New York, on 29th and 30th May.

The Director advised the Committee that the theme of the conference would be 'building bridges of mutual benefit between two cities' and that a range of prominent individuals from business, community and political organisations would attend. He reported that the Council had been invited to speak at the conference and he indicated that the estimated cost of attendance, per delegate, together with the costs associated with the Council hosting a reception at the event, would be £7,500.

Accordingly, he recommended that the Committee agree to authorise the attendance at the event of the incoming Chairman and Deputy Chairman, together with the Director (or their nominees).

The Committee adopted the recommendation.

Belfast/Boston – Sister Cities Relationship

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Background Information

1.1 Members will be aware that from 19-25 March 2014 the Lord Mayor and the European Manager travelled to New York and Boston to continue working to foster stronger trade, education and tourism links with the key cities in the North American market. This work aligns fully to the aims and objectives of Council's International Relations Framework.

1.2 During the visit, the Lord Mayor visited the Massachusetts State Senate President, Therese Murray, and the Mayor of Boston, Martin Walsh. He also met with Invest Northern Ireland's Boston office and Boston business leaders, as well as the American Ireland Partnership who have a long history of investing in Community and Cross Community education projects in Ireland, including Belfast. Meetings also took

place with Secretary Kerry's local office on the Global Partnerships initiative and the President of Sister Cities International.

1.3 During this programme of meetings it became more and more evident that there is a real interest at the highest political level to do business and develop closer ties with Belfast.

2. <u>Key Issues</u>

2.1 During the visit to Boston, the Lord Mayor met with the Mayor of Boston to tentatively explore the opportunity and value of entering into a formal city to city cooperation agreement. During the meeting, the Mayor of Boston expressed his desire to enter into a Sister Cities Agreement to foster real actions and opportunities between both cities in the areas of: economic development, trade and investment; tourism; cultural exchange and faith based exchange and educational linkages.

2.2 This would require the development and signing of an official Sister Cities Agreement in line with the standards and codes of Sister Cities International. It would also require the development of an agreed annual action plan to drive and monitor the initiative in each city.

2.3 This detail would be developed and presented to the incoming Belfast City Council from June 2014 and championed by the incoming Lord Mayor and the new Development Committee which would continue to be responsible for the delivery of the Council's International Relations Framework. Plans are already underway with the current Lord Mayor to undertake an exchange of faith based leaders in both cities in autumn 2014.

2.4 Members are asked to agree to the establishment of a formal Sister Cities Relationship and to ensure this is formally signed between both city Mayors within the timescale of the current term of the existing Lord Mayor.

2.5 The Head of Invest NI for North America, Gary Hanley has fully endorsed the potential of a Belfast Boston Sister Cities relationship to support Northern Ireland companies in the marketplace.

2.6 Members should also be aware that the Massachusetts State Senate President, Therese Murray, is fully supportive of a Belfast/Boston Sister Cities relationship and fully endorses

the proposal. President Murray has collaborated with Minister Poots to put in place a Memorandum of Understanding between Boston and Northern Ireland on connected health issues. She will be in Belfast in September 2014 as part of a political programme and business mission to the North and South of Ireland. It is expected that she will be accompanied by Congressman Richard Neal, and potentially the Mayor of Boston, Martin Walsh, both strong supporters of the NI Peace Process and economic development promotion between Northern Ireland and North America.

2.7 As part of the BCC International Relations Framework Action Plan, Committee agreed to engage in the next EU/US Connected Health Alliance Conference to be held in Boston in October 2014. Members are therefore asked to agree to host President Murray and her delegation at a City Hall civic reception in September at a maximum cost of £5,000.

3 <u>Resource Implications</u>

3.1 It is anticipated that the cost of hosting a civic reception to welcome Massachusetts State Senate President Murray and her delegation will not exceed £5,000.

5 <u>Recommendations</u>

- **Agree to enter into a formal Sister City Relationship Agreement with the City of Boston and that it is signed by the current Lord Mayor of Belfast before 2 June 2014.**
- **That a Sister Cities Action Plan is thereafter developed in agreement with both cities.**
- **Agree to provide a welcome reception for Senate President Murray and her political and business delegation in September 2014.**
- **Agree to provide a budget of £5,000 to cover this visit."**

The Committee considered also the proposed wording for a Sister Cities agreement between Belfast and Boston, a copy of which was published on the Council's Mod.gov site.

A number of Members expressed concern that the agreement between Belfast and Boston had been initiated without the prior consideration and endorsement of the Committee. It was pointed out that the Committee had been unable to assess the viability of the initiative and provide guidance on its implementation.

Concern was expressed also in respect of the proposed wording of the draft agreement, in particular, the use of the word 'Mayor', as opposed to 'Lord Mayor', was objected to by a number of Members. In addition, it was suggested that the term 'peoples of Ireland' be deleted from the wording of the document, since the agreement was solely between the two cities.

Prior to proceeding to a vote in the matter, the Committee agreed to endorse the wording of the agreement, subject to the replacing of the word 'Mayor' with 'Lord Mayor' and to the deletion of the term 'peoples of Ireland'.

Accordingly, it was,

Moved by Councillor Spence,
Seconded by Councillor Kingston,

That the recommendations as set out within the report be adopted, subject to the amendment that the signing of the Sister Cities agreement between the Lord Mayor and the Mayor of Boston would take place after the date of the Local Government Elections on 22nd May and prior to the end of the current Lord Mayor's term of office.

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

Accordingly, the Committee adopted the recommendations as set out, subject to the amendment to the wording of the draft agreement as noted.

Food Tourism and Belfast Restaurant Week 2014

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1 Background Information

1.1 Food Tourism is recognised globally as an important theme that many destinations are using to maximise tourism, investment, sustainability and marketing opportunities. Food tourism also plays a role in animating and enhancing the visitor experience, and it is also important as a product which can effectively market and sell a city and region.

1.2 To maximise the opportunities that food tourism presents for Belfast it is important that events such as Belfast Restaurant Week (BRW) are integrated into a fully supported and integrated food tourism plan for Belfast.

1.3 Since the launch of BRW in 2012, it has become a well established event in the city's culinary calendar and has been fully endorsed as an important initiative by Northern Ireland

Tourist Board (NITB), Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD) and Tourism Ireland.

1.4 BRW 2013 took place from 5 to 12 October and research confirmed that it was extremely successful for the businesses taking part as well as for the promotion of the city and the development of a strong food tourism event.

1.5 BRW 2013 successfully:

- **Delivered Taste and Dine at Belfast City Hall on 5 and 6 October 2013 – a mini food village was created outside City Hall, featuring local artisan producers, pop-up restaurants, and St George's Market. Each day there was a packed programme of chef demonstrations, wine talks and a full celebration of the local agrifood sector.**
- **The registration of 80 participating restaurants promoting special signature menus and offers to develop and encourage more patronage of the restaurants that showcase the agrifood sector among citizens and visitors during the week in October 2013.**
  - **13 Hotel restaurants, 44 restaurants, 5 cafes, 12 bars/pubs and 6 other**
- **The programming of 30 special food themed events throughout the week which will raise the profile of the agrifood sector and the restaurants they supply.**
- **BRW 2013 successfully showcased the brand of Belfast and Northern Ireland through delivering innovative, forward thinking, authentic and celebratory events which will fully promote our food offer in an exciting and inspiring way.**
- **Delivered over 4.5 million impacts through the media plan**
- **Wide coverage in key press – BBC and UTV, Belfast Telegraph, Irish News, Newsletter, Radio Ulster, U105, Cool FM, Downtown, Citybeat, BBC Radio 12 – all positive**
- **Excellent interaction and involvement with restaurants**
- **Developed excellent links with Translink and Belfast Fashion Week**
- **93% of restaurants surveyed agreed that BRW provided a positive platform to promote food in the city**
- **90% agreed BRW attracted new customers**
- **85% agreed it will impact positively on future sales.**
- **49,000 people from Greater Belfast Area attended a BRW event**

- **Attendees rated the event(s) positively**
- **91% expressed likelihood to revisit the event in the future.**
- **There was also strong agreement from respondents that the event(s):**
  - **Increased their knowledge of city's food product (70% agreement)**
  - **Increased their knowledge of the use of local produce in Belfast restaurants (59% agreement)**
- **Overall average spend per person during BRW was £20.61, with the highest spend coming from Special offers/menus at Belfast restaurants (£25.61 on average).**

1.6 A Belfast Restaurant Steering Group has been established and they have contributed to seminars and workshops to help shape BRW 2014.

1.7 The objectives of the Belfast Restaurant Week 2014 are to:

- **Increase footfall and mid week dining**
- **Showcase new and multi cultural food offering across the city**
- **Showcase the range of dining experiences for a range of lifestyles**
- **Showcase local produce, excellent chefs, skills and wealth of the food offer**
- **Contribute to Belfast's culinary events calendar**
- **Positive media attention of Belfast as a tourism destination**

2 <u>Key Issues</u>

2.1 It is crucial to build on the success of BRW 2012 and BRW 2013 and ensure that BRW 2014 creates more economic impact and support for the restaurant/hospitality sector. It is necessary that adequate resources and support are in place to achieve the aims and objectives. BRW 2014 (4 to 11 October 2014) planning is underway and BCC has successfully been awarded sponsorship of £21,000 from NITB's events fund to support the week.

2.2 A key stakeholder Steering/Working group has been established to implement the plans as well as a Sector Steering Group to ensure that BRW 2014 delivers for the industry. To instigate registration it is proposed that BRW 2014 will be launched to the consumer in August 2014.

3 Resource Implications

3.1 Food Tourism Development and BRW 2014 require support from a number of sources. The sum of £50K has been identified for BRW 2014 and broader food tourism initiatives within the departmental budget and £21,000 has been secured via the Northern Ireland Events Fund sponsorship. On approval additional funding will be sought from a range of partners, together with contributions from each participating restaurant.

4 Recommendations

1. **To approve a budget of £50,000 identified from Department budget and approve officers seeking additional funding and sponsorship to support BCC investment which will develop a food tourism plan and support the delivery of Belfast Restaurant Week 2014.**

2. **Members approve acceptance of £21,000 sponsorship package from the Northern Ireland Events Fund administered by NITB.**

3. **Members approve Officers procuring services to help deliver Belfast Restaurant Week 2014 and a food tourism development plan.**

4. **The Chairman agrees to host an Industry Launch and take part in the consumer launch in August 2014."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement - Response

The Committee was advised that the Department of the Environment had issued for consultation a Strategic Planning Policy Statement which sought to establish the scope and future direction for regional planning policy. The Director outlined the principal aspects of the Council's response to this document and, after discussion, the Committee endorsed the response, a copy of which was published on the Council's Mod.gov website.

Community Grants Programme 2015/2017

The Committee noted that the Statutory Transition Committee, at its meeting on 9th April, had endorsed a Council-led approach to the implementation of the Community Development Grants Programme 2015/2017, and had agreed also to proceed to an open call for applications in June, 2014.

Belfast Poet Laureate Initiative

The Committee was reminded that the Lord Mayor had appointed Dr. Sinead Morrissey as Belfast's inaugural Poet Laureate in July. The Director outlined the range of duties which Dr. Morrissey had performed since her appointment and the outreach initiatives which she had undertaken. He pointed out that Dr. Morrissey, together with the United Kingdom Poet Laureate, Carole-Ann Duffy, together with a range of performers, would attend a celebratory event on 14th May at the Movie House Cinema, Dublin Road.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and noted further that a report in respect of the Council's future involvement with the Poet Laureate initiative would be submitted for consideration in due course.

Blue Plaques

The Committee was reminded that, in 2012, it had agreed to fund a three-year rolling programme to assist the Ulster History Circle to erect blue plaques at locations throughout Belfast which would acknowledge the lives of citizens who had contributed to the City's history. The Director reported that in 2014/2015 the Circle was proposing to erect further plaques to commemorate the footballer Danny Blanchflower, the poet and architect Padraig Gregory, the academic Professor A. E. Muskett, the playwright St. John Ervine and the actor J. G. Devlin.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Pride of Place Awards 2014

The Committee was reminded that the Pride of Place Competition provided community groups from throughout Ireland with an opportunity to showcase initiatives which have had a lasting and positive impact upon their communities. Since 2004, the Council had sponsored, with considerable success, the participation of several groups in the Competition. It was reported that the Council had been invited to nominate five groups to take part in the Pride of Place 2014 awards ceremony, which would take place in Ennis, Co. Clare, on Saturday, 15th November. The Director indicated that the following five groups had been identified as being suitable for entry in the competition:

- **The Oak Partnership** – based in the east of the City, Oak Partnership had been established to promote health, education and well-being for the benefit of children, young people and adults in the Clarawood community and surrounding areas;

- **Ligoniel Improvement Association** - based in north Belfast, the association worked to improve the quality of life in Ligoniel and provided integrated services to address poverty, unemployment and social exclusion;

- **Sandy Row Community Forum** – based in the south of the City, the community forum acted on behalf of a range of local community groups in the Sandy Row area and sought to promote the area in terms of tourism and economic development;

- **Whiterock Hub** – based in the west of the City, the Hub sought to address environmental quality issues within the general Whiterock area and encouraged individuals to participate in community activity which would reflect positively and add to the regeneration of the vicinity; and

- **Windsor Women's Centre** – this centre, which was located in the Village area, worked to provide a community development framework to promote equality of opportunity for women within an area of high social need and economic deprivation

After discussion, the Committee approved the entry of a maximum of five groups as outlined and approved also the attendance at the awards of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, the Director and the Project Officer (or their nominees), together with a maximum of two representatives of each group, and authorised the payment of the entrance fees, travelling and accommodation costs in connection therewith, which, it was noted, would be approximately £5,500.

Northern Ireland Science Festival

The Director reminded the Committee that Belfast was due to host the Northern Ireland Science Festival in 2015. The Director outlined the economic importance of the event and how it would help showcase the City and enable local communities to become involved in outreach events and educational activities.

The Committee noted that a request for assistance towards the costs associated with the hosting of the Festival would be considered in due course.

Chairman