

East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 6th April, 2017

MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Alderman Haire (Chairperson);
Aldermen McGimpsey, Rodgers and Sandford; and
Councillors Copeland, Dorrian, Graham, Howard,
Hussey, Johnston, Jones, Long, Milne and Newton.

In attendance: Mr. N. Grimshaw, Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director;
Mr. D. Rogan, Head of Contracts;
Miss E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Milne and O'Neill.

Minutes

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 13th March, 2017, were an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Long declared an interest in Item 5. Belfast Investment Fund Update, in that he was a Board Member of Lead Hill School.

Greenwich Leisure Limited – Review of 2016

(Mr. G. Kirk, Regional Director, attended in connection with this item.)

Mr. Kirk tabled a document which reviewed Greenwich Leisure Limited's (GLL) achievements for 2016, under its four strategic elements of Better Business, Better Communities, Better People and Better Services and provided a comparison with the previous year. He advised that the review had included the following key points:

- the number of centres being managed by GLL had risen from 12 in 2015 to 14 in 2016;
- total memberships had risen from 8,452 to 16,515 between 2015 and 2016;
- 2,100 memberships had been generated online;
- 49% of customers had booked services using the online booking facility;

- the number of children who had enrolled in the Better Swim School had risen from 1,250 in 2015 to 2,750 in 2016;
- the GLL Foundation had supported 57 athletes;
- the MacMillan 'Move More' Cancer Programme had been launched in leisure centres; and
- 108 new staff had been appointed to permanent, temporary and seasonal posts.

In terms of 2017, Mr. Kirk confirmed that GLL was expecting to see further increases in activity through, for example, the opening of the new Olympia Leisure Centre, the introduction of new programme and career opportunities and improved communication with customers and that it would continue to support its Sports Foundation and other initiatives and organisations.

During discussion, Mr. Kirk highlighted the aquatic strategy across the city and clarified the reasons for different swimming pool temperatures for various activities. He advised that the new swimming pool at Olympia Leisure Centre would accommodate parent and baby sessions. He also confirmed that private swimming instructor arrangements were working well.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Presentation – Queens University

The Working Group was advised that representatives of Queen's University Belfast were in attendance to present details of the University's contribution to the Belfast Agenda. Accordingly, Mr. D. Corbett, Community Engagement Manager, Ms. A. Cummins, Community Impact Officer and Mr. R. Feeney, Head of Public Engagement, were welcomed by the Chairperson.

Mr. Feeney outlined the vision and values of the University and informed the Working Group that Queen's University had gained a global reputation as a centre of teaching excellence and innovative research. The Members were then provided with a presentation, which outlined the role which the university played at a local and strategic level, together with its notable achievements, future plans and the main challenges which it faced. During the presentation, the following points emerged:

- East Belfast accounted currently for 774 of the University's student population and for 6,760 of its alumni;
- at a community level, 11,000 students were involved in clubs and societies, 3,000 students were involved in volunteering and 17 homework clubs for children and young people were being facilitated;
- Easter camps and summer revision schools were also being considered;
- the University had established a unique pilot Pathways Opportunity Programme, which offered those groups which were under-represented currently within the student population an alternative entry route into the University;

- the University was working with the Northern Ireland Executive to address the issue of underfunding in third level education in Northern Ireland, which was currently the lowest in the United Kingdom;
- should funding levels continue to be cut, there were be 2,000 fewer student places available in the University by 2020;
- in 2015/2016, 37% of UCAS students in Northern Ireland had enrolled in universities overseas; and
- the University would be launching a Social Charter in May and was currently developing a Corporate Plan, which would in due course be presented to the Council and emailed to Members.

During discussion, the Working Group noted that further information would be provided by Mr. Feeney regarding the impact of Brexit to the University, the East Belfast schools currently involved in the Pathway programme, and a detailed analysis of what action was being taken to engage with school children in East Belfast. The Working Group also noted that a tour of the University would be helpful.

Mr. Feeney concluded by emphasising the importance of continued partnership working between Queen's University and the Council through, for example, the Belfast Agenda and the Local Development Plan and, having been thanked by the Chairperson, the representatives left the meeting.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Local Investment Fund

The Head of Contracts provided an overview of the report which included an update on the progress of those projects which had yet to be completed under the Local Investment Funds (LIF phase 1 and LIF phase 2).

He advised that the Dock TQ project was presented to the LIF Due Diligence Group on 9th February for the Dock Market. However, subsequently the Titanic Quarter Ltd had advised that they were unable to stand over their letter of support or meanwhile lease due to a commercial offer being received for the premises occupied by the Dock Market. He confirmed that the group was now asking for the funding to be provided towards the upgrade of the current location of the Dock Café to allow the market (which was being moved as above) to take place there on a regular basis.

After discussion, the Working Group agreed to the proposed change in project location, as recommended by the Due Diligence process on 23rd March.

Belfast Investment Fund (Outer East)

The Head of Contracts provided the Working Group with an update on the 6 Emerging Projects (Stage 1) for the £2million which had been ring-fenced for the Outer East area under the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF):

- TAGIT Boxing Club;
- Hanwood Centre;
- Braniel Church;
- Castlereagh Presbyterian Church;
- Tullycarnet Community Support Services; and
- Lisnasharragh Community Schools Project (including Cregagh Primary School, Knockbreda Primary School, St Bernard's Primary

School, Lisnasharragh Primary School, Lead Hill Primary School, Lough View Integrated Primary School and Our Lady and St Patrick's College Knock).

During discussion, Members expressed concern that they were behind on their decision making process for allocation of BIF and the necessity for further information and a potential timeline of completion for the projects to be produced.

The Working Group agreed that a detailed status update and delivery timeline for completion of all of the BIF projects be submitted for consideration at the next meeting and that the options appraisal, previously agreed to, be expanded to link with the outcomes which had been previously identified at the recent planning workshop.

Dates of Future Meetings

The Area Working Group noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 4th May at 5pm.

Chairperson