

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Open Minutes of the Business and Culture Committee Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Derry on Tuesday 7 July 2020 at 4.00pm

Present:- Councillor Farrell (Chairperson); Aldermen Guy, Warke; Councillors J Barr, Cooper, Cusack, Durkan, Ferguson, Logue, McCloskey and Mellon.

Non-Committee Member:- Councillor McCann

In Attendance: Director of Business and Culture (Mr S Gillespie), Head of Business (Mr K O'Connor), Head of Culture (Ms A McCarter) PA to Director of Business & Culture (Ms J Galloway-Doherty) and Committee Services Assistant (Mrs J Short).

BC85/20 Notice and Summons of Meeting

The Director of Business and Culture read the Notice and Summons for the meeting.

BC86/20 Member Attendance and Apologies

The Director of Business and Culture took the roll call and recorded apologies received from Councillor's R Barr, M Boyle and Alderman Ramsey.

BC87/20 Statement for Remote Meetings

The Chair read the Statement for Remote Meetings.

BC88/20 Declarations of Members' Interests

Alderman Warke declared an interest in the following agenda items:

- Rural Development Programme Update
- Supply of marketing services for the International Appalachian Trail

Councillor Ferguson declared an interest in Agenda Item: Rural Development Programme Update.

Open for Decision

Chairpersons Business

BC89/20 Economic Recovery

The Chair welcomed Members back to the first physical meeting of the Committee. He referred to his opening remarks at the previous meeting whereby he had stated that Council and the Business and Culture Committee in particular, had a key role to play in the economic recovery post Covid-19. He referred to recent discussions by the Strategic Growth Partnership that alluded to a high number of imminent job losses throughout the City and District. He also referred to concerns raised by his party colleague Ms Sinead McLaughlin, MLA regarding the lack of investment opportunities in the City and District and that 82% of new jobs were located in Belfast and other Council areas and not in Derry.

He further referred to the recent publication of an outline plan for economic recovery by the Economy Minister entitled 'Rebuilding a Stronger Economy – Pathway of Recovery' and expressed concern that there was no indication of providing targeted support and it was important that this remained on the agenda in all future discussions with Government Officials.

The Chair also referred to a recent Government announcement that the UK's arts, culture and heritage industries will receive £1.57 billion rescue package to help with the economic impact of coronavirus; and Northern Ireland will be allocated £33m from the support package towards arts venues. He urged that Council would take a lead role on behalf of the arts and cultural organisations represented within the City and District Council area to ensure that the funding support be provided.

Councillor's McCann and McCloskey joined the meeting.

The Chair subsequently proposed, seconded by Councillor Cusack that Council lobby the Executive to ensure that the entire £33m was allocated to cultural/arts organisations and individuals and that Council also lobby the relevant Department tasked with the delivery of that funding to ensure that venues, organisations and individuals across the DCSDC area would receive a fair share of the funding.

The Committee

Recommended that Council lobby the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that the entire £33m be allocated to cultural/arts organisations and individuals and that the relevant Department tasked with the delivery of the funding would ensure that venues, organisations and individuals across the DCSDC area in particular would receive a fair share of the funding.

BC90/20 Virtual Learning Festival

Councillor Durkan referred to the recent Virtual Learning Festival and commended the Officer team responsible. She said that the programme was extremely varied and interesting and the feedback from participants was positive.

BC91/20 Return of Local Sailor to Derry

Alderman Warke referred to the return home of local sailor Mr Gary Crothers after completing a 4000mile solo voyage from the Carribean. He commended the achievements of Mr Crothers and expressed disappointment that the Clipper Carlton Event had been cancelled due to Covid-19, because Mr Crothers would have been delighted to have met with the participants.

Matters Arising from the Open Minutes of the Business and Culture Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 9 June 2020

BC92/20 Black Lives Matter Campaign (BC73/20)

Councillor McCann referred to the above minute and expressed concern that he had not received any confirmation as to who or what party had issued a statement asking for the event on 6 June 2020 to be cancelled. He also alerted Members to the fact that another demonstration would be held shortly, and he wanted to give adequate notice so to prevent similar action being taken on the day.

The Chair advised that the issue referred to was previously discussed by Committee and Council and therefore it was unnecessary for any further discussion on this occasion.

BC93/20 Museum & Visitor Services Digital Engagement Programme 20-21

The Head of Culture presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to present Members with the Museum & Visitor Services "Digital Engagement programme for 2020-21".

Councillor Cusack welcomed the report. She commended the hard work of Officers during these unprecedented times.

Councillor Cooper welcomed the report. He commented that the digital engagement programmes would also provide an opportunity for schools to become involved. He also referred to the re-opening of the facilities and queried the social distancing measures to ensure the safety of users.

The Head of Culture assured Members that the Council Health and Safety Officers would provide support to ensure that social distancing restrictions were operational throughout all facilities when they would reopen at the end of the month.

Councillor Logue requested that Members be given the opportunity to view the physical exhibitions prior to opening to the public.

The Committee

Recommended that Council notes the contents of the reports and approve the new and evolving "Digital Engagement

Programme 2020-2021" for the Museum and Visitor Services Team.

BC94/20 DAERA Rural Business Capital Grant Scheme - Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation

The Head of Business presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Member. The purpose of the report was to update members on funding from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for the roll-out of a Rural Business Capital Grant Scheme for the financial year 2020-2021.

Councillor Ferguson welcomed the report. She commented that this is was a crucial time for support to be provided to businesses.

The Head of Business in response to Councillor Mellon advised that the scheme would provide funding support to as many businesses as possible and would be widely promoted by various sources to include social media platforms. He agreed to confirm with Councillor Mellon the total number of applicants to date.

The Committee

Recommended that Council;

i) agrees to participate in the second Rural Business Development Grant Scheme in 2020-21, subject to the award of funding from DAERA through the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme;

ii) that subject to Council approval, delegated authority is granted to accept the Letter of Offer and to administer the programme on behalf of DAERA.

BC95/20 Post Covid-19 Recovery - Labour Market Interventions

The Head of Business presented the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Member. The purpose of the report was to update Members on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market and highlight proposed broad areas of labour market intervention designed to help mitigate these impacts.

Councillor Durkan welcomed the report. She referred to the economic impact of the pandemic crisis and the imminent redundancies due to business going into insolvency and asked for the green tourism sector to be explored as part of the above recovery initiative.

Councillor Ferguson welcomed the report and expressed appreciation of the information provided. She referred specifically to the issue of childcare provision and expense and suggested that businesses be encouraged to provide an incentive for child-care providers to work in collaboration so to assist parents return to the workplace.

Councillor Cusack referred to the recent exposure of Invest NI's financial negligence and incompetence and queried if Members would be given the opportunity to address the issues with Invest NI Officials at a future Committee meeting.

The Chair confirmed that Invest NI Senior Officials had been invited to attend the next Committee Meeting to be held on 8 September 2020.

Councillor Cooper referred to the previous speakers comment regarding Invest NI. He said that he was not concerned about the lack of intervention by the local Office when dealing with SME's, however he was concerned about the wider approach by core management. He said that his party colleagues intended to meet with Senior Officials from Invest NI to discuss pertinent issues. He added that the wider issue was engagement with all relevant stakeholders in terms of encouraging a co-ordinated approach within the community training sector so to ensure that participants of the training skills programmes are encouraged to advance to levels 3 and 4 and be in a better position to apply for higher paid jobs.

Councillor Mellon concurred with the previous speaker's comment regarding the provision of training opportunities for people at level 3 to advance to degree level. She also referred to children who had fallen behind in their education due to Covid-19 and singled out as being disadvantaged because of no technology to assist with home-

schooling. She also referred to increased mental health issues post Covid-19, amongst all age groups within the City and District and this required to be included in the development of recovery plans in going forward.

The Committee

Recommended that Council;

i) notes the contents of the report and endorse the proposed broad areas of labour market intervention designed to help mitigate these impacts. These include Careers Information & Guidance, Health & Wellbeing, Apprenticeships, Skills Academies, Employer Incentives and Supporting Inclusion in Education.

ii) agree for Officers to bring forward a Covid-19 Skills Recover Plan to Members in September 2020.

Open for Information

BC96/20 Informal Catering Tender

The Head of Culture provided the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of which was to inform Members of the outcome of the Informal Catering Tender for the Museum & Visitor Services Premises.

Members noted the content of the report and the appointment of Syngé and Byrne for the Museum & Visitor Services Informal Catering.

BC97/20 Rural Development Programme Update

The Head of Business provided the above update report to Members regarding the NI Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

Members noted the above report for information.

BC98/20 PEACE IV Update

The Head of Business provided the above report in order to update Members on the implementation of the DCSD Council PEACE IV Programme.

Members noted the above report for information.

BC99/20 Business Innovation and Growth Programme

The Head of Business provided the above report, the purpose of which was to advise Members of the appointment of Full Circle to deliver the Business Innovation and Growth Programme (BIG) as a result of a CPD tender process.

The Members noted the contents of the above report for information.

BC100/20 Alley Autumn/Winter Programme

The Head of Culture provided the above report in order to inform Members of proposed adjustments to the Alley Autumn/Winter 2020 Programme.

Members noted for information the revision to the proposed Alley Autumn/Winter Programme.

BC101/20 Online North West Cultural Exchange

The Head of Business presented the above report a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to inform Members of ongoing support provided to the Culture Sector during the Covid 19 crisis.

Members noted the above report for information.

BC102/20 Strabane, Mourneberg and Glenelly New Business Seed Grant

The Head of Business provided the above report, a copy of which was previously circulated to Member. The purpose of the report was to update Members on New Business Seed Grants issued through the Strabane Town Forum and Mourneberg and Glenelly Action Plans.

Members noted the above report for information.

The meeting went into confidential business.