

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Open Minutes of Business and Culture Committee Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Derry on Friday 10 November 2017 at 4.00pm.

Present:- Councillor Logue (Chairperson); Aldermen R Hamilton, Hussey, Ramsey and Warke; Councillors Cooper, Cusack, Fleming, McMahon, O'Reilly and Reilly

In Attendance:- Director of Business and Culture (Mr S Gillespie), Head of Culture (Ms A McCarter) Personal Assistant to Director of Business and Culture (Mrs J Galloway-Doherty) and Committee Services Assistant (Mrs T Johnstone).

Non-Committee Members: Councillor P Kelly

BC213/17 Notice and Summons for Meeting

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

BC214/17 Member Attendance and Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Boyle, McKnight and McGuire

BC215/17 Declarations of Members' Interests

Alderman Ramsey declared an interest in the following agenda item:

- Agenda item 10 – Visit Derry Review

Councillor Cooper declared an interest in the following agenda item:

- Agenda item 10 – Visit Derry Review

Open for Decision

BC216/17 Chairperson's Business

Halloween Festival

The Chair congratulated everyone involved in the Halloween Festival which had been a great success throughout the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.

Alderman Hussey stated that two members of the clergy had raised concerns over the recent celebrations and suggested that they be invited to speak to Members to have their concerns addressed.

Alderman Warke commented on the success of the festival which brought the whole City and District together. He raised one issue regarding disability access along the quay which had become restricted due to the large volume of people who had attended the event.

Councillor Reilly commended all the staff involved in making the Festival such a success. He concurred with the comment made regarding disability access. He stated that it had been difficult to view some of the performances held in the City and suggested that perhaps some events could take place on an elevated platform. Councillor Reilly stated that in relation to the comments by Alderman Hussey, he had heard the concerns raised by the clergy and added that people can have their own opinions, however that should not detract from what was a wonderful occasion.

Councillor O'Reilly also congratulated Council staff, volunteers and performers who had helped create the four day experience in the City and District. He stated that any concerns raised over the festival were answered by the large number of people that turned out.

Councillor McMahon stated that people in both Derry and Strabane had voted with their feet in respect of the Halloween celebrations. He raised an issue with SPARK street musicians who had performed during the day in Strabane and remarked that the performance would have been more effective at night.

BC217/17 Confirmation of the Open Minutes of the Business and Culture Committee held on Tuesday 10 October 23017

The Open Minutes of the Business and Culture Committee Meeting held on 10 October 2017 (BC187/17-BC206/17) were agreed and signed by the Chairperson.

On a point of accuracy Alderman Warke stated that under BC191/17 the Chair had also mentioned the Northern Ireland Football Team in her congratulations.

Matters Arising

BC218/17 Car Parking Anti-Social Behaviour Update

Councillor P Kelly referred to the recommendation for the installation of a barrier at an unlit car park in Strabane at a cost of £10,000. He enquired if a barrier would also be installed at the larger car park as young people would congregate at this area in their cars.

Councillor McMahon reported that in a previous meeting he had been informed that barriers would be installed at both car parks.

The Director of Business and Culture stated that he would clarify the matter and bring a report to a future Committee meeting.

Councillor P Kelly then referred to signs within the Derry City and Strabane Council area. He stated that this was the only district in the north that did not have signs welcoming visitors to the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.

The Head of Culture reported that signage would be erected throughout the City and District once they had received guidance on the language policy.

BC219/17 St Patrick's Day Strabane

Alderman Hussey stated that he had expressed his disappointment at full Council that the St Patrick's Day Festival in Strabane would become an Irish spring carnival.

BC220/17 Tower Museum Accreditation 2017

The Head of Culture presented the above report a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to advise Members of the Museum Accreditation Scheme and request approval of the following key documents as part of the requirement for museum accreditation:

- Collections Development Policy

- Care and Conservative Policy
- Documentation Policy
- Access Policy

Councillor Cooper stated that he fully supported the recommendations within the report. He referred to the collections of artefacts owned by Council and private collectors which required adequate and suitable storage. He stated that in terms of building collections for new facilities such as the Maritime Museum, a dedicated space would be a requisite to be used as a depository for Council and private collectors.

Alderman Hussey seconded the recommendation and welcomed that the Tower Museum was accredited under the UK standard for museums and galleries. He stressed the importance of the Care and Conservation Policy for the storage of artefacts.

Councillor P Kelly referred to Council offices in Strabane which was formerly the site of the Workhouse. He stated that historical items were stored at the rear of the building which could be put on display as they held a lot of historical value for the Strabane area.

The Head of Culture stated that the majority of items from the Strabane Legacy Council had been amalgamated with the Museums' collection. She further stated that the inventory was rolled out as part of the Interpretation and Display programme at the Tower Museum, Guildhall and the Alley Theatre where possible. She added that in terms of storage, there was limited space which could to be considered going forward.

Alderman Hussey stated that there was an issue with storage and also where collections could be viewed at relevant locations. He enquired why the Stables Museum in Sion Mills had not been included in the policy.

In response, the Head of Culture stated that the Stables Museum was not owned by Council. She reported that Council had an intensive programme of attempting to put as many items as possible on display and make them more accessible. She stated that the Museums Service ran numerous programmes to bring artefacts out for display to ensure that the collections were accessible to as many people as possible and she had worked collaborating with other museums to do this. She informed Members that they would be invited to tour the stores which were not open to the public at a future date. The Head of Culture then

stated that the new Maritime Museum would increase the gallery and display space significantly which would allow more of the collections to be on display.

Alderman Hussey stated that he realised the Stables Museum in Sion Mills was not owned by Council. However it was the only museum that operated in the former Strabane District Council area and believed that a partnership should be established.

The Committee

Recommended **that Council approves the following key documents as part of the requirements for accreditation**

- **Collections Development Policy**
- **Care and Conservation Policy**
- **Documentation Policy**
- **Access Policy.**

BC221/17 Music to Your Ears III

The Head of Culture presented the above report a copy of which was previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to inform Members of a letter of offer received from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) for the delivery of an Arts and Older People Project within the DCSDC area.

Alderman Ramsey proposed that Members accept the letter of offer from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and asked that the list of groups be made available to ensure that they are all included in the project.

Alderman Hussey stated that a similar project had been successful in Strabane and participants had found it extremely beneficial. He referred to the partnership support of £7,510 for the development of the project and asked if Council could increase the amount to £10,000 to match the ACNI level of support.

Councillor McMahan queried why the project asked solely for male participation.

The Head of Culture stated that with regard to Alderman Hussey's request, she would check the conditions within the letter of offer.

In response to a query raised by Councillor McMahon, the Head of Culture that the project had been initially set up to address the issue of older males in the community who had become isolated in the community. She added that men had been identified as a particular group with isolation issues, therefore the project was being delivered to address their needs.

The Committee

Recommended that Council accept the letter of offer and proceed with the delivery of the project and that partnership support will be drawn from member approved arts and culture budgets for £7,510.

BC222/17 International Relations Activities

The Director of Business and Culture presented the above report details of which had been previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on ongoing international activities to date and seek approval to proceed with proposed programme of work.

Councillor Cooper stated his support for the recommendation as tourism could greatly benefit from the collaboration. He referred to Council's links with China and reported on the large tourist level of interest in terms of visitors being attracted to this area. He proposed that a report be brought back to Members which detailed the direct job relationships and economic benefits and also Council's commitment towards those relationships.

Alderman Ramsey stated that regarding links with other cities, New Hampshire should be considered as it had been developed by citizens who had emigrated from here almost 300 years ago. He added that those links could provide a great tourism boost for the City.

Alderman Hussey welcomed the ongoing developments regarding international activities to date. He stated that he was mindful that Foyle Port had not been mentioned within the report. He added that the port

had international business links and the new tug had been commissioned and built in China. He then referred to the MoU draft and as a matter of accuracy stated that 'Derry Strabane County Council' be amended to Derry City and Strabane District Council.

At this point in the meeting Alderman Hussey declared an interest in this agenda item.

Councillor Reilly stated his support for the recommendation and stated that were links had been made with other areas due to events such as the Clipper Festival, Council should focus on areas where the benefits could be maximised, and have connections in other areas.

In response, the Director of Business and Culture stated that on their first visit they were not only seeking companies to come here but also becoming a trading partner. He stated that a lot of the companies received orders and had already started to show the benefits in terms of the markets. He further stated that local companies would be travelling to Boston for business to business conversations. He added that in terms of New Hampshire, the team were currently concentrating on establishing and developing the connections in Boston and Philadelphia on a more mature level. The Director then referred to Foyle Port and stated that the port was an important economic partner and a member of the economic partnership group within the Community Plan. He added that 95 percent of business at Foyle Port was importing rather than exporting but that Council did work closely with the port.

Alderman Warke enquired how long it would take for the benefits from developing the international connections to show. He also referred to the visit by the Lord Mayor of London and asked if any business relationships had been formed.

The Director of Business and Culture stated that there was no time limit and will bring a report to update Members with benefits that had been achieved thus far. He reported on the ties between the City and the City of London and that the Lord Mayor of London had attended a joint presentation for businesses in the financial sector who may have been looking for potential overflows or centres to develop their business.

The Committee

Recommended that Council (i) approve the development and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Boston; and (ii) to develop more formalised relationships with the City of Dalian, Laoning Province, China.

BC223/17 Visit Derry Review

The Head of Culture presented the above report details of which had been previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to update Members on the independent review of Visit Derry which was carried out to consider the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation within the context of the new Council area and the Strategic Growth Plan. She stated that any recommended increased contribution would be subject to the rates process

Councillor Cooper stated his support for the recommendation and that from experience, in terms of overheads the current budget was a paltry sum compared to what was required. He remarked that the performance levels had risen over the last decade and with such a small amount designated to marketing, showed how much potential existed if adequate money was directed towards Visit Derry. He referred to Belfast and its designation by Tourism NI as a gateway city which as a result, received increased marketing budgets. He stated that Tourism NI had designated the Halloween Festival as a regional festival rather than international despite the fact that it had attracted around 40,000 visitors to the City. He further stated that this was unacceptable as it did not permit Council to bid for international events.

Councillor McMahon suggested that the recommendations for Visit Derry did not fit in with the Sperrins area which was a jewel in the crown for Council. He stated that feedback from the consultation process for the Community and Village Plans could help the Visit Derry team consider a more in depth look at the Sperrins and what it had to offer.

Alderman Hussey concurred with the remarks and expressed concern that the Strabane area would not be considered for a further five years. He stated that he was mindful of an SLA review at any stage however, the wider product in the Strabane and West Tyrone area should be marketed. He suggested that a parallel organisation be set up with an

appropriate budget to look at the niche markets and consider other markets within Strabane and West Tyrone.

Councillor Reilly remarked that Visit Derry had worked hard to promote the City and District. He stated that the recommendation be supported to ensure that everything is done to attract people to come and visit, not just at Halloween but at any time of the year. He referred to the amalgamation of Derry and Strabane Councils and stated that Visit Derry were aware of the impact it would have on their work to incorporate the entire City and District.

Alderman Ramsey welcomed the proposed increase in future funding for Visit Derry and stated that resources also needed to be increased to accommodate the rise in visitor numbers to the City. He further stated that Council need to have the infrastructure in place as the City had the potential to draw large visitor numbers on a regular basis.

Councillor McMahon remarked that although he had raised concerns regarding the Sperrins he was not stating that Council were not doing enough regarding tourism.

The Head of Culture stated that Visit Derry had two main objectives; visitor services and destination promotion. The review had specifically asked to make some recommendation on how to best bring forward Visit Derry given the fact that the Council area had extended. She stated that details on product development in Strabane and West Tyrone would be covered in the tourism strategy report which would be available in the New Year and were the subject of other reports to this committee including those on Sperrins Future Search work and other Tourism product development related reports. She added that Visit Derry had a role in visitor servicing when visitors were attracted to the area which included driving the visitor out into products right across the entire Council area.

The Committee

Recommended that Council (i) increase the contribution on a phased basis of £693,175 which could commence in 2018/19 subject to the funds being made available from the rates process; and (ii) agree

officers to review the current SLA in light of the recommendations.

Open for Information

BC224/17 Strabane Business Improvement District

The Head of Business presented the above report details of which had been previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the current progress of the Business Improvement District (BID).

Councillor P Kelly stated that he welcomed the BID programme as something new and positive for the Strabane area.

Councillor McMahon stated that the programme had launched last year through Strabane Town Forum and the businesses involved in the initiative were beginning to reap the benefits. He extended his thanks to the organisations, and officers who had worked on the programme.

The Committee

Recommended that Members note the contents of the report.

BC225/17 Update on PEACE IV Programme

The Head of Business presented the above report details of which had been previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to update Members on the implementation of the local PEACE IV Programme funded by the SEUPB.

Councillor Reilly declared a non-pecuniary interest in this agenda item.

The Committee

Recommended that Members note the contents of the report.

The Meeting went into confidential business.