

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Open Minutes of Business and Culture Committee Meeting held remotely on Tuesday 13 October 2020 at 4.00pm.

Present: Councillor Farrell (Chairperson); Alderman Guy, Ramsey and Warke; Councillor's J Barr, R Barr, M Boyle, Cooper, Cusack, Durkan, Ferguson, Logue, McCloskey and Mellon.

Non-Committee Member: Councillor's Donnelly and Reilly.

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).

**Mr Alan McKeown, Executive Director, Regional Business, Invest NI
Mr Des Gartland, NW Regional Office Manager, Invest NI
Mr Graeme Wilkinson, Director of Skills Division, Department of the Economy
Dr Malachy O'Neill, Ulster University (Magee Campus)
Mr Peter Devine, Ulster University
Mr Leo Murphy, Principal and Executive of North West Regional College**

BC127/20 Notice and Summons of Meeting

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

BC128/20 Member Attendance and Apologies

The Director of Business and Culture took the roll call and noted no apologies received.

BC129/20 Statement for Remote Meetings

The Chair read the Statement for Remote Meetings.

BC130/20 Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

Open for Decision**BC131/20 Presentation: Update on Skills from the following representatives:**

Mr Alan McKeown, Executive Director, Regional Business, Invest NI

Mr Des Gartland, NW Regional Office Manager, Invest NI

Mr Graeme Wilkinson, Director of Skills Division, Department of the Economy

Dr Malachy O'Neill, Ulster University (Magee Campus)

Mr Peter Devine, Ulster University

Mr Leo Murphy, Principal and Executive of North West Regional College

The Chair welcomed the representatives to the meeting and invited them to provide an update to Members on Skills development. (A copy of the presentation was previously circulated to Members). He stated that following the presentation Members would be given the opportunity to seek points of clarification or comment if they so wished.

The following comments were expressed by Members:

- Clarification required from the Executive with regards to bringing forward proposals in terms of the new expansion to Magee campus
- Expansion to Magee campus is a dedicated piece of work
- Concerned about the lack of implementation of a sub-regional strategy – Jobs and skills referred to by Invest NI – need to be more specific
- Need to ensure enough is being done in terms of targeting of skills development province wide.
- Concerned about duplication and gaps in terms of progression of the skills strategy.
- Apprenticeship programmes worked well.
- Issue with the long-term unemployed – important that they are offered employment opportunities for every programme tendered.
- Work of NWRC first class.

- Development of partnerships was key in the skills development process.
- Important to bridge the gap to get people back into skills training.
- School leavers at 16 to be encouraged to return to community training schemes and then to develop further – conveyor belt approach.
- City Deal – future fund to target specific skills programme
- Welcomed collaboration.
- Potential gap to widen out to other institutions – eg. The Green Economy and recovery and DCSDC area was lagging in comparison to neighbouring Councils areas – Strategies and legislation need to come from the Executive in order to drive forward potential gaps and opportunities.
- More information required in relation to the NWRC requirements to meet the skills based and clarification on potential barriers.
- Acknowledgement of appreciation to Invest NI for their support to businesses during the pandemic crisis.
- Clarification on what further support will be provided to companies or individuals post Covid and Brexit and what challenges were anticipated.
- Appreciated the invitation to visit the apprenticeships at the Training Centre.

The representatives responded as follows:

- In terms of Magee expansion in skills offering – additional spaces in nursing, new provision in paramedic training and new school of medicine will offer an expansion.
- Final consultation on health science provision.
- City Deal Projects; CARL and CEDRA will develop research that will ultimately lead to teaching and the creation of a Centre of Excellence globally and regionally.
- Future facing strong projects lead to the development of world leading research that will set the City apart and enhance the University.
- City Deal proposal – encourage people to stay in the City
- Wider conversation with community training providers to be continued.
- Fill every gap that existed in terms of people who are long term unemployed and those who wish to upskill.

- Reference to wind energy – Ministers keen to explore. Certainly keen for the partnership to discuss green economy within the region.
- Continue to build sustainability through the existing curriculum in the NWRC to skill people appropriately.
- SSE in terms of wind energy bursaries for students – Appreciate that it is a separate pathway for employment but also a skill set that young people required.
- Ulster University – when engineering introduced in 2013 sustainability was a big driver and established CITRA – renewable energies at the core.
- NWRC – extremely committed to keeping young people and adults in the city and region and to offer skills to offer better job opportunities.
- NWRC is a NI Centre of Excellence around health and social care.
- Post Covid may create the opportunity for people to return or remain in the smaller cities and towns.
- Current climate is seeing technology businesses setting up in new places – wide range of support available.
- Invest NI busy at present with new start-ups
- Important to promote a joined-up approach for new businesses.
- Invest NI offer support package that runs through to early business advice, business start-up programme lead by Council and then support across the board in terms of employment etc.
- NWRC provides skills around innovation in order to assist small companies with product development. There are a whole range of interventions in order to assist businesses in moving forward.

Discussion ensued after which the Chair thanked the representatives for sharing their expertise and plans for the future and he wished them every success.

The representatives left the meeting at this stage.

Chairperson's Business

BC132/20 Grant Scheme for Hospitality Businesses in Derry and Strabane

The Chair congratulated the Mayor of Council for his pursuit of a request to Government for the provision of financial support to those businesses affected by further restrictions due to an increase in Covid-19 positive cases throughout the DCSDC area.

BC133/20 Shared Island Initiative – €500 million Funding Package

The Chair referred to the recent announcement by the Minister for Public Expenditure (Dublin Government) that €500 million would be allocated to the Shared Island Initiatives. He said that the investment would support the progress of cross-border infrastructure initiatives such as the A5 transport corridor and the expansion of universities.

The Chair proposed, seconded by Councillor M Boyle that Council writes to the Dublin Government to welcome the financial commitment and to seek a meeting with representatives of the Shared Island Initiative in order to discuss the projects that directly impacted the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.

The Committee

Recommended **that Council writes to the Dublin Government to welcome the funding package of €500 million towards the Shared Island Initiative and to seek a meeting with representatives to discuss the projects that directly impacted the DCSDC area.**

BC134/20 Funding Support for Arts, Culture and Heritage Organisations

The Chair referred to the Government funding package of £33m towards Arts, Cultural and Heritage Organisations. He said that it was essential for Council to ensure that the money filtered down to the relevant groups. He proposed that Council writes to the relevant Minister to welcome the funding support but to also express explicit concern regarding the need for immediate assistance. He also urged Council to promote the funding schemes throughout the various media platforms so that the message gets out to the relevant individuals. Councillor Cusack seconded the proposal.

The Committee

Recommended **that Council writes to the relevant Minister responsible for the funding support scheme towards Arts, Culture and Heritage**

Organisations to express appreciation and to also express concern regarding the need for immediate assistance.

Matters arising from the Open Minutes of the Business and Culture Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 8 September 2020

BC135/20 Minute ref: BC112/20 Harbour Square Re-development – Factory Girls Sculpture

Councillor Cooper referred to the announcement by the Department earlier that day that funding would be secured towards the above project. He thanked the relevant Minister and said that this would be a massive step forward in terms of the progression of the fitting tribute to the Factory Girls as part of the Harbour Square re-development project.

BC136/20 Minute ref: BC119/20 – Christmas Programme

Alderman Warke referred to the recent announcement by Belfast City Council regarding the cancellation of the Christmas Market. He said that in-light of this decision he felt it was appropriate for this Council to do the same. He proposed to cancel the Christmas Market in Derry in the interest of public health and safety. Alderman Ramsey seconded the proposal.

Councillor Logue expressed the view that the proposal was somewhat premature. She said that the Christmas Market provided a boost to the economy and her party colleagues would require more time in order to consider the proposal.

The Director of Business and Culture advised Members that Belfast City Council had to make the decision early due to the lead-in time for participants, whereas DCSDC Christmas Market made use of existing trading opportunities for the local traders and required no lead-in and there was no financial impediment. He said that discussions could continue with key stakeholders and statutory authorities and Members would be kept informed through Committee or Council.

Councillor R Barr agreed with previous speakers that it would be premature to cancel the Christmas market at this stage. He said it was important to proceed with as many festive activities as deemed possible

in the current climate, because morale was at all time low amongst the community.

Councillor J Barr concurred with the previous speaker's comments.

Alderman Warke stated that he made the proposal in order to alleviate the risk of large gatherings because the safety of the public was paramount. However, following discussion of the issue he was content that any decision to cancel the market could wait and requested for the Director of Business and Culture to continue to keep the situation under review and to inform Members accordingly.

BC137/20 Christmas Programming Update

The Head of Culture presented the above report details of which were previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to update Members on programming development for Christmas and to seek approval for additional budget identified for Community Christmas activity.

The Head of Culture assured Members that Officers would continue to look at alternative ways to acknowledge Christmas whilst ensuring the health and safety of the community.

The Committee

Recommended **that Council i) note and approve programming and financial arrangements as set out in the above report; ii) agree to allocate £15,000 for this year through the Neighbourhood renewal structure subject to review for 2021; iii) agree for the Culture working group to meet early in 2021 to review how community grant aid funding is distributed through a competitive grant aid process for Christmas 2021 and beyond.**

BC138/20 Collaborative Resilience Project Update

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 proposed collaborative resilience project to be delivered in partnership with the Arts Council for Northern Ireland (ACNI) and to seek Member approval for the initiation of a procurement process in partnership with ACNI.

The Committee

Recommended that Council approve the initiation of a procurement process for the delivery of the Collaborative Resilience Programme in partnership with ACNI.

BC139/20 Access and Inclusion Programme Update

The Head of Culture presented the above report, details of which were previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to provide an update to Members on the projects submitted to the Department for Communities (DfC) led Access and Inclusion programme. The Head of Culture advised however that since the report was circulated the PHA have confirmed the sum of c20k for International Day of Persons with Disabilities Programme. The Head of Culture suggested that the recommendation within the report be amended to include the acceptance of the letter of offer from the PHA.

The Committee

Recommended that Council i) note the projects submitted to DfC for accessibility funding; ii) accept the letter of offer from PHA for the delivery of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities programme in December 2020.

BC140/20 Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Update

The Head of Business presented the above report, details of which were previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to

provide Members with an update no progress of the FFNI project with BDUK and on the outcome of the tender exercise and next steps.

The Committee

Recommended **that Council i) approve the award of the contract to Fibrus following the successful tendering process; ii) agree for Officers to initiate the project and bring regular updates to Committee; iii) agree for Officers to develop a clear plan for the migration of WAN to the new infrastructure.**

BC141/20 Harbour Square Redevelopment Project Update

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 update Members with regards to the proposed application to the Department for Communities (DfC) for the Harbour Square Redevelopment Project including the installation of a new public artwork within this space. He said that he was delighted to confirm that funding had been secured from the Department for Communities towards the redevelopment project.

Councillor Cusack welcomed the report. She stated it was imperative for the project to be progressed because Council owed it to the citizens of the District to protect their heritage.

Councillor Logue reiterated the comments from Councillor Cusack and welcomed the report.

The Chair welcomed the report and the recent announcement of funding secured from DfC. He expressed his appreciation to the Director of Business and Culture for his contribution to the process. He sought clarification in relation to the timeline involved with progressing to the next stage.

The Director of Business and Culture clarified that the next stage was the appointment of a design team and would take approximately 6 months followed by the tendering process over a further 6-month

period. He said that best case scenario was that hopefully groundwork would begin on site within approximately the next 12-14 months. He said the most difficult stage of the process to secure funding had been achieved and he was therefore extremely confident that the process would gather pace in moving through to tender stage. He added that regular updates on progress would be provided to Members.

The Committee

Recommended that Council approve the additional contribution of £7,350 to complete stage 1 design costs.

Open for Information

BC142/20 Derry and Strabane Learning City Region Initiative

The Head of Business provided the above report, details of which were previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to update Members on the Derry and Strabane Learning City Region Initiative.

Councillor Reilly referred to the previous presentation from representatives of Education and suggested that the City and District be marketed in a way to encourage people to not only live and work in the City but to also learn. He suggested the promotion of virtual learning by the various marketing campaigns driven by for example Visit Derry. He added that there was scope for connectivity across the various initiatives.

The Director of Business assured Member that they would continue to build upon the development of what had been achieved in terms of the promotion of the region to include learning and skills.

Councillor Cooper commented that it was important to continue with the promotion of a sub-regional approach and to market the City as a place to live and work and redevelop as part of the City Deal and the wider North West. Councillor Reilly agreed that there was scope for connectivity across the various initiatives.

Members noted the contents of the above report for information.

BC143/20 NIBSUP Update

The Head of Business presented the above report, details of which were previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to provide Members with a progress update (up to August 2020) on the Northern Ireland Business Start Up Programme (NIBSUP) with specific reference to programme versus statutory and corporate jobs targets.

Members noted the contents of the above report for information.

BC144/20 Covid Recovery and Revitalisation Plan

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 Members with an update on the extensive range of interventions delivered by Council across the Strabane Town, Derry City Centre and the rural areas to support business and economic wellbeing.

Members noted the contents of the above report for information.

BC145/20 Social Justice and Workers Rights Motion Update

The Director of Business and Culture provided the above report, details of which had been previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to update Members on the engagement with businesses regarding access to trade unions and fair employment for their employees.

Members noted the contents of the above report for information.

BC146/20 Centenary of Northern Ireland in 2021 Update

The Head of Culture provided 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 plans for the Centenary of Northern Ireland in 2021 in this Council area.

Councillor Cooper stated that whilst he welcomed the report and had no issue in relation to the planned exhibitions, he felt that some of the

language used within the report was not acceptable from his party perspective.

He specifically referred to the wording used in paragraph 2.1 of the report; *Northern Ireland is one of the four countries of the United Kingdom*. He said that it would be preferable that such language would not be included within a Council report. He further expressed concern and stated that from his party perspective they would not support any proposal that celebrated the North as a single entity

Members noted the contents of the above report and that a further report would be brought back to Committee should there be confirmation of external funding.

BC147/20 Off-Street Car Parking – Non charging on St Patrick’s Day

The Head of Business provided the above report, details of which had been previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to advise Members of the inclusion of St Patrick’s Day as a non-charge/enforcing day for Derry City and Strabane District Council’s off-street carparks.

Members noted the contents of the above report for information.

BC148/20 Strabane Community Library Changing Place Facility

The Head of Culture provided the above report, details of which had been previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to update Members on the proposed installation of a changing place facility within Strabane Community Library.

Councillor J Barr urged for Council to continue with their deliberations to secure a Changing Place Facility in Strabane Town.

Councillor M Boyle agreed that the proposed Changing Place Facility at Strabane Community Library was the most suitable location to cater for the needs of people with complex disabilities. She urged Council to continue to lobby Libraries NI and DfC in order to ensure that the proposed installation of the facility is provided for the citizens of Strabane town.

Members noted the contents of the above report for information.

The meeting went into confidential business.