

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE MEETING: 19 MARCH 2002

Those present: First Minister
Deputy First Minister
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Minister of Education
Minister for Employment and Learning
Minister of the Environment
Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment
Minister of Finance and Personnel
Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

In attendance: Secretary to the Executive
Assistant Secretary to the Executive

INTRODUCTION

Circulation of Executive Papers

1. The Chairman advised the Executive that the following paper had been circulated to the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Social Development: -

- E (02) 29 – Capital of Culture Bid

AGENDA ITEM 1

E (02) 29: CAPITAL OF CULTURE BID

2. The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure presented the paper to the Executive.
3. The Minister for Employment and Learning and the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment both declared an interest as members of Belfast City Council, the lead authority in the submission of the bid.

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4. The Executive recognised the need for the bid and all associated projects to take account of inclusivity and equality considerations and that during the forthcoming months some consideration should be given to the relationship between the Executive and Belfast City Council. The Executive also indicated that some consideration should be given to ring-fencing the resources required for this bid.
5. The Executive
 - (i) agreed that Belfast should bid to be Capital of Culture in 2008;
 - (ii) recognised in particular, that the detailed material in Annex 1 of the paper represents an initial summary of a range of measures already planned and proposals for new projects which might support the bid;
 - (iii) recognised that in supporting Belfast's bid, there are potential financial consequences for Departments. Where proposals are not already provided for in existing plans these would have to be considered in the usual way against other competing bids at that time;
 - (iv) agreed that a detailed economic appraisal of the bid will be conducted by September 2002 (in time for the Budget process) and that DCAL will additionally lead an interdepartmental group to produce a detailed plan for the Executive outlining:
 - a. the measures for which it is proposed central government funding will be sought;
 - b. measures for which money is already available;
 - c. the measures for which money is not currently available, their estimated cost, and a cost benefit analysis of those

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measures, drawing on the economic appraisal as necessary;

- (v) agreed that the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure should make a statement to the Assembly on 19 March about the bid making the points set out in Annex 7 of the paper, and, outlining, in particular, the Executive's position regarding the public expenditure implications of the bid;
- (vi) endorsed the aspirations of the 3 themes including that of 'To Live Without Walls' but recognises that the physical removal of walls would require significant changes at interface areas; and
- (vii) agreed to review progress with an initial report from the interdepartmental group in May 2002 and an update on the bid progress from DCAL in June 2002, and further regular reports thereafter, as appropriate.

OTHER BUSINESS

E (WP) (02) 27 – Victims Strategy

6. The Executive endorsed the Victims Strategy.

Ministerial Code

7. The Minister of Education expressed his concern regarding comments made by the First Minister during his speech at the recent Ulster Unionist Party Annual General meeting which he believed were in breach of the Ministerial Code. The First Minister responded to the concerns and following comments from other Ministers it was agreed that the Ministerial Code should be the subject of discussion at a future Executive meeting.