The Derry Walls Management Group: Implementation Group

06 June 2019

Venue: CCI Derry/Londonderry

Attendees:
Maybelline Gormley (Chair – HED State Care)
Catherine Crawley (Visit Derry)
Manus Deery (HED – Advice and Regulation)
Margaret Edwards (DCSDC – Heritage)
Martin Graham (Tourism NI)
Colin Greer (DfC-NWDO)
Mark Lusby (FODW)
Tony Monaghan (DCSDC – Regeneration)
Edward Montgomery (HIS)
Jennifer O’Donnell (DCSDC – Tourism)
Jim Roddy (CCI)
Paul Mitchell (HED- minutes)

Apologies:
Roisin Doherty (DCSDC – Museums)
Odhran Dunne (Visit Derry)
Maura Fitzpatrick (DCSDC-Regeneration)
Aeidin McCarter (DCSDC – Events)
Stef McMullen (HED – State Care)
Jonny McNee (DCSDC – Planning)
Brian Neely (DfI – Roads)

The meeting began at 14:10

1.0 Introductions and apologies

MGo welcomed all to the meeting and apologies were noted.

2.0 Operational issues

2.1 Management Plan updates

MD said he had received updates and there were some ongoing changes to make. 
Action: MD to make the necessary changes to the Management Plan.

2.2.1 Regulatory signage update.

There was a discussion on whether additional signs should be installed. The meeting agreed – in order to reduce the gap between existing signs – for additional signs opposite the Craft Village and at the Playhouse, though a stand would need to be erected for the latter sign. ML did not agree with format or location of signs.
Action: MGo to arrange erection of signs accordingly.

2.2.2 Walls Health and Safety options appraisal.

MGo said that the previously discussed health and safety paper was an internal HED paper and had been accepted by the DfC Board; it was a summary of previously discussed points re the Walls (as noted previously).
2.3 Vegetation Survey

MGo said that the CCI wardens would receive training in June and would therefore be able to tackle vegetation directly.

MGo introduced the ‘Survey of Flora Growing on Walls’. There was a discussion on the report and the various issues surrounding vegetation: whether vegetation detracts from the presentation of the Walls, or whether it ‘softens’ the environment; problems concerning access to private properties to remove vegetation; and whether the vegetation actually damaged the Walls.

ML was particularly concerned with the presentation of the Gates, suggesting that they were poorly kept and non-photogenic with rampant vegetation and water ingress leading to cracked and loose mortar and requested they be cleaned of vegetation.

JR said that the presentation of the Gates should be in a wider holistic sense, incorporating lighting and cannons - not just focusing on vegetation.

MD summarised the discussion saying that: if the vegetation is not intrusive does it need to be removed; how best to coordinate a holistic approach to the Gates; and how to resolve the issue about access private property to remove vegetation. MGo asked MD to summarise his points in an email for circulation.

**Action:** MD to draft summary email accordingly.
**Action:** JR to photograph the gates to highlight how the Gates could be better presented.

2.4 Conservation Update

JR reported that the graffiti on the western perspective has been removed.

MGo reported that the Conservation Works Team’s work on the Royal Bastion was complete except for one day which was needed after the other contractor works were completed. Phase 1 of the Hibernian Hall was complete and HED await notification from the architect to initiate phase 2.

2.5 Lighting update

MD confirmed that the Western perspective uplighting scheme was due to have been finalised at the end of the financial year but there had been a delay in the manufacturing process.

CG raised the issue of the installation of walkway lighting in light of the findings at section 2.1.8 of as per the Access Audit which says “Uplighters should not be located within pedestrian routes as the glare can impair a person’s vision and for people with
impaired vision the light can make it worse. The tops can be slippery when wet.” Discussion followed on the relevance of this finding to the Western perspective uplighting scheme.

MD said that the lighting project had been commissioned before the access audit was published. It was noted that as the scheme had not been delivered in full before the Audit became available the findings of the Audit should be considered when implementing the current lighting scheme. CG said that if there was no evidence of any public liability claims relating to alleged slips/falls as a result of the currently installed Western perspective uplighters and the risk of slip/falls on these uplighters was deemed to be low, the scheme could potentially proceed as planned but it should be documented that the findings of the Audit had been considered and any risks associated with installation of the uplighters was considered to be low. See point 2.10 for further discussion of the Access Audit.

2.6 Cannon update

ME reported that quotations had been received for the condition survey and a preferred contractor was identified; this would be ratified by council in August. The subsequent survey and report would provide prioritised recommendations for conservation work to the cannon.

ME said that the Irish Walled Town network had provided some funding for this report.

2.7 Planning update

The meeting noted the planning updates provided by Jonny McNee – works to Foyle Street bus station (ref: LA11/2018/0804/F); a change of a building from commercial to residential at 12 Shipquay Street (LA11/2019/0331/F); and a retail unit in the Richmond Centre (LA11/2019/0408/F) - but focused on a proposed 3 storey commercial building on lands adjacent and to the east of the Verbal Arts Centre (LA11/2019/0434/F).

MGo circulated architectural plans of the proposed building. MD raised reservations about the aesthetics of the building given its location within the Walls.

ML suggested that buildings such as these should be charged fees due to their prime location. MGo said this would be a matter for the Strategic Group and also suggested that HED respond to this request setting out HED’s concerns about the plan.

Action: MGo to write to Jonny McNee accordingly.

2.8 Visitor and tourism update

2.8.1 JO’D said that there would be a drop in opportunity on 20/06/19 to view proposals on the Visit Derry’s proposed move to their new building.

Action: JO’D to share details with the group.
2.8.2 JO’D said that the number of proposed footfall sensors had been reduced from 30 to 16.

2.8.3 The “Walled City - 400 Years” summer series of events was being officially launched on 14th June 2019.

2.8.4 CC reported that there had been an 8% increase in bed occupancy in the first quarter of 2018.

2.9 Events consultation: HED application form

2.9.1 MGo said that work was ongoing on the issue of refining the HED application process as well as issues sounding GDPR and access to footage. 
Action: PM to place this issue on the agenda of the next Implementation Group meeting.

2.9.2 On the subject of the ongoing issue of minimum insurance limit difference between DfI and SAG/council, ME said she would raise the issue of equivalent insurance cover with the council. 
Action: ME to discuss insurance cover accordingly.

There was a wider debate about whether HED could licence imbiss stalls and traders on the Walls. JR said he would seek legal advice from the city solicitor.

Action: JR to write to Philip Kingston (DCSDC solicitor) accordingly.

2.10 Access Audit

MGo said she was disappointed that the Access Audit made no reference to the fact that the Walls were a 17th century historic monument and that there had been no dialogue with Historic Environment Division prior to publication.

ME said that for budgetary reasons she was keen to progress the recommendations of the audit. ML suggested that an Access Audit statement might need to be appended to the Conservation Plan.

MG said that a subgroup should be set up to discuss the Access Audit in depth: HED and DCSDC to attend, with CCI and Visit Derry invited.

Action. MGo to organise a sub group and convene meeting.

2.11 Social Media principles / guidelines

ML queried whether the Walls were getting sufficient coverage in HED’s Love Heritage Facebook page and asked if HED’s forward engagement plans could be shared with
the Management Group. MD said there was a case to be made for wider strategic marketing of the Walls and that this should be taken forward by the Strategic Group.

MGr commended Odhran Dunne for his recent appearance in front of the NI Affairs Committee.

As per previous meeting action point, MD said he was still to progress the meeting with ME.

Action: MD to meet with ME to progress drafting the social media guidelines.

3.0 Minutes of previous meeting (08 April 2019)

At point 2.7 (public realm scheme: presentation of bastions); CG said that the £4.5m business case for the Inner Walled City Public Realm Scheme had been signed off by the DfC Economist and that the DfC funding required for the project had been included in NWDO’s 5 year investment plan. Subject to DoF approval and securing the budget construction works could commence by 2021.

MD said he would progress a review of the Conservation Plan for 2021.

Action: MD to progress conservation Plan review.

Action: PM to include the water bastion scheduling in agenda of the next meeting.

4.0 AOB Other

4.1 ML raised the issue of ‘street furniture’ – e.g. bins outside certain restaurants, vans in Guildhall Square, etc. – and how they took away from the aesthetics of the Walls and if anything could be done to discourage such installations.

Action: JR to speak to the business owner to ascertain if there is a better way of storing these bins.

4.2 MGr said that Tourism NI (in association with Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland) was sponsoring an upcoming “Taste the Ireland” showcase of Irish food and drink and that he would share the weblink.

4.3 MGo requested that the Dog’s Leg (DOJ landscape options) be included on the agenda of the next implementation group meeting.

Action: PM to include agenda item accordingly.

4.2 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of both the Implementation and Strategic groups was agreed for September, date dependent on that arranged for the Strategic Group.
The meeting concluded at 16:35.