

Development Committee

Wednesday, 8th May, 2002

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT) SUB-COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor M. Browne (Chairman); and
Councillors Crowe, Cush, Hutchinson,
McCarthy, Morgan, O'Donnell and E. Smyth.

Also attended: Councillor Stoker.

In attendance: Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives;
Dr. E. Jackson, Economic Development Manager; and
Mr. J. Goodall, Committee Administrator.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th April, which had been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as correct.

Local Economic Development Programme

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 10th April, it had noted that the Council's application for funding under the new Local Economic Development Programme had been successful and would result in an amount of £5,494,365 being made available to the Council during the period from 1st April, 2001 till 31st December, 2005. On the basis of match funding being provided by the Council, this would represent an amount of just under £11 million being available towards the promotion of economic development within the City.

In addition, the Members had been advised that the language used within the formal document submitted with the Council's application for funding to the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment had tended to reflect functional and practical imperatives as distinct from more descriptive or popular terms. Accordingly, it had been agreed that the submission be re-drafted in a more user-friendly format and that it be presented for consideration by the Sub-Committee prior to it being made available to key stakeholders and the public.

The Head of Economic Initiatives recommended, in view of the scope of the document, that a Briefing Session be held to consider the re-drafted document.

The Sub-Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the Briefing Session be held on a date to be agreed in conjunction with the Chairman (Councillor M. Browne).

Investment Belfast Limited

The Head of Economic Initiatives reminded the Sub-Committee that, at its meeting on 4th October, 2000, it had agreed in principle to support the core costs, up to a maximum of £250,000 per annum, of Investment Belfast Limited through the period of the current Economic Development Strategy until 31st March, 2003, subject to satisfactory annual reviews. In addition to the core costs, a related allowance, up to a maximum of £50,000 per annum, had been allocated towards project costs, with each application being considered on its individual merits and brought in advance to the Sub-Committee for consideration. The Sub-Committee had considered also a detailed performance and budget report and had agreed formally to provide the core costs until 31st March, 2002.

Subsequently, the Company had made bi-annual presentations to the Sub-Committee outlining the progress achieved against established targets. Two further informal presentations had been made to the Sub-Committee, the most recent having taken place on 28th February, when a draft Action Plan for 2002-2003 had been presented. The Action Plan had been prefaced by a detailed overview of the performance and achievements to date of Investment Belfast Limited.

Following that meeting, an internal review of processes had been initiated with a view to establishing optimal planning and operational arrangements and further meetings had taken place between officers of the Department and the Company's Chief Executive. These had explored further the precise nature and extent of the establishment and project-related costs in order to determine definitively the Council's contribution in respect of the remainder of the financial year 2002/2003. In parallel with this, the Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 10th April, in accordance with its previous approval in principle towards the funding of the Company, had agreed to release a quarterly interim payment to cover the period from 1st April till 30th June, 2002. Accordingly, a payment of £62,500, representing one quarter of the existing annual running costs of £250,000, had been made available to the Company.

The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that Consultants had been appointed and the evaluation of the performance of Investment Belfast Limited was scheduled for completion in June, 2002. It was envisaged that the outcome of the evaluation would assist the Members in determining future financial support for the Company beyond March, 2003. She reported also that Investment Belfast Limited had submitted for the approval of the Sub-Committee a detailed operational plan for the period ending 31st December, 2002, copies of which had previously been circulated. The plan would not result in any increased running costs for the period and contained a number of measures to be implemented during this period of transition for the Company.

Accordingly, the Head of Economic Initiatives recommended that the Sub-Committee authorise the payment of an amount of £250,000 towards the running costs of Investment Belfast Limited for the period from 1st April, 2002 till 31st March, 2003, with project costs being considered on their individual merits at the meeting of the Sub-Committee in May.

The Sub-Committee agreed to adopt the recommendation.

Business in the Community

The Head of Economic Initiatives submitted a report in relation to a proposal from Business in the Community and in relation to a request for financial assistance towards the costs of staging a dinner to celebrate its achievements. A copy of the report, with exception of the Appendix referred to therein, is set out hereunder:

“Purpose of Report

To present Members with a submission from Business in the Community and to request support for the BITC ‘Celebrate & Challenge Event’.

Background

Business in the Community is a registered charity which was founded in Northern Ireland in 1989. They now have over 220 regional member companies actively involved in making a difference within their communities.

Business in the Community members use their skills, expertise, influence, products, resources, people and profits to promote regeneration in partnership with each other, the public and the voluntary/community sector.

Community Regeneration is at the heart of all Business in the Community activities. Over the past four years, community regeneration activity within Business in the Community has been led and co-ordinated by its Belfast Business Leadership Team. Business in the Community plans to introduce a thematic approach to sustainable community regeneration, two of these proposed themes are sustainability and employability.

Proposal Submission

The Proposal (please see Appendix I) was first submitted in March 2001 at a time when the Sub-Committee was reluctant to commit to any new proposals due to its phasing out. It also coincided with the application for funding for the LED programme.

Discussions between Business in the Community, Chair of the Economic Development Sub-Committee and the Economic Development Manager, outlining the proposal, have taken place in the interim. An updated proposal is now presented for Members’ information.

The Proposal

Under the two themes of Sustainability and Employability, Business in the Community is proposing to deliver a range of initiatives which will make use of its extensive and growing network of member companies and their wide range of skills and resources.

i) Job Help

Business in the Community are proposing to deliver four initiatives to enhance the job prospects for people currently unemployed. Employers have a crucial role to play in this process and Job Help will add value to current activity. The four planned initiatives are:

Employability Toolkit for Employers: Circulate a publication of 'best practice' case studies by local companies recruiting unemployed applicants.

Employment Opportunity Briefings: Bringing local employers into contact with community organisations to provide information on job opportunities.

'Through the door' Visits: Visits for groups of unemployed people to meet local employers.

Work Experience Placement Programme: Provide work experience opportunities in partnership with local community organisations.

ii) Prohelp

Business in the Community is proposing to deliver a number of initiatives throughout Belfast. It plans to use the skills, experience and influence of its member companies to assist Community Organisations to address the issue of sustainability. These initiatives are:

Seeing is believing visits: Bringing private sector companies to meet local community managers to see the work undertaken.

Community briefings: Providing information and access to BITC community regeneration initiatives to networks of local community organisations.

Project Support: Professional expertise made available in support of capacity buildings, sustainability and community development.

Professional Advice Briefings: Briefings from professional experts on issues impacting on sustainability.

Neighbourhood Zone Support: Expertise made available to local neighbourhood zones in support of sustainability and community development.

Regeneration Boards: Private sector representation on community boards.

Management Skills Training: Skills training for community

leaders.

Members are asked to consider the recommendation that this proposal is explored in further detail and presented to the next Committee meeting in more detail. Members are asked to note that Business in the Community would be seeking a financial contribution from Belfast City Council of approximately £72,000 per annum over the next two years to support the Job Help/ProHelp Programme. Please see Appendix I for a breakdown of costs.

Celebrate and Challenge Event

Business in the Community is planning an event to 'Celebrate' the substantial achievements of its member companies and employees in its efforts to assist the social and economic regeneration of the city. Through examples of best practice it hopes to 'challenge' other companies to get involved in similar activities for the first time.

Over 150 companies will be invited to attend along with key representatives from the statutory and community sectors.

Date:	Tuesday 25th June, 2002
Venue:	Clandeboyne Estate, Helen's Bay
Event Structure:	Black Tie Dinner
Total Cost:	£5,500
BCC Contribution:	£2,000

BITC is requesting financial support of £2,000 from Belfast City Council to enable this event to happen. Acknowledgement of this support would be available on all promotional literature relating to the event. The Lord Mayor, key Councillors and Council Officers would also be invited to attend and participate in the event.

The following day, BITC are planning to run a 'Seeing is Believing Tour' which would give Members an opportunity to see first-hand the valuable work being undertaken by Community Managers.

Budget

A contribution of £2,000 to support the Celebrate and Challenge Event.

Environmental Implications

None.

Development Strategy Reference

3.2 To undertake a training needs analysis of Belfast and its

population and develop a strategy to meet identified needs.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- i) note the contents of the report**
- ii) consider the proposal**
- iii) agree to pursue this proposal in further detail in order to present Committee with a more specific and targeted programme of information**
- iv) to consider funding of £2,000 to support the Celebrate and Challenge Event.**

Decision Required

To approve the foregoing recommendations.”

During discussion in the matter, a number of Members voiced concern that, in respect of Year 1 of its Job Help/ProHelp programme, Business in the Community was seeking financial assistance from the Council in the sum of £72,000 in respect of a total expenditure of £84,000. The view was expressed that, having taken into consideration the number of Companies which participated in the project, the Council was being requested to provide disproportionate financial assistance. It was suggested also that, as the celebration dinner was not being held within Belfast, it would not be appropriate for the Sub-Committee to accede to the request for financial assistance.

After further discussion, the Sub-Committee agreed not to support financially the celebration dinner and agreed also that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman meet with representatives of Business in the Community to outline the stated concerns of the Members prior to a special meeting being held to receive a presentation in this regard from representatives of the Charity.

Gasworks Local Employment Initiative

The Sub-Committee agreed to receive at a special meeting representatives of the Gasworks Local Employment Initiative to provide an update on the Initiative which had been established by the Council in 1999 with a view to providing a platform to encourage, support and guide individuals in South and East Belfast and to equip them with the necessary skills to access employment opportunities in the Gasworks and Laganside areas. It was agreed also, in view of the importance of the Initiative, that all Members of the Council be invited to attend the special meeting, to be held on a date to be determined in conjunction with the Chairman (Councillor M. Browne).

World Trade Centre

The Sub-Committee considered the undernoted report, copies of which had previously been circulated, in respect of the development of a World Trade Centre in Belfast:

“Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update with respect to the development of a World Trade Centre for Belfast.

Background

Members will recall the presentation of a detailed report at the Economic Development Sub-Committee meeting on 8th January, 2002 with respect to the proposal to build a World Trade Centre in Belfast.

Members will be aware that the Multi Development Corporation have proposed a second phase to their Victoria Square retail scheme, to include the development of part of the Musgrave Street Police Station for a World Trade Centre building.

At the stage of writing, the Police Service of Northern Ireland is considering redeveloping the station and have been in negotiation with the Council to clarify title of the land before offering it for development.

Costs

With respect to the World Trade Centre licence, Members will be aware that the Multi Development Corporation (MDC) were successful in their application for a full licence for Belfast and the metropolitan area. They have been keen from the outset that Belfast City Council should jointly hold the licence for the city with them and have requested that the Council share the licence.

A full licence for Belfast will cost £140,000 as a one off payment with a further £7,000 per year membership to the Association thereafter.

A shared licence would in effect cost the Council a down payment of £70,000 with ongoing annual costs of £3,500. In fact, with additional partners (as is the case in other cities) the costs could reduce pro-rata.

Current Position

At the Economic Development Sub-Committee on 9th January, 2002, Members were presented with a number of case studies examining the structure, common characteristics, partnership features and benefits associated with having a World Trade Centre.

At the meeting, Members deferred consideration of the World Trade Centre issue to enable the matter to be considered in depth by each of the party Groupings on the Council. Since then, an array of Party briefings have taken place with Members on a number of issues including Cultural Tourism, BMAP, City Partnership and festivals. It has proven extremely difficult, therefore, to arrange any further briefings with individual Party Groupings with respect to the

World Trade Centre. The process is moving on and some indications are required by Sub-Committee in relation to this, given

the requirement to accept the licence within six months which brings us to June 2002. This report therefore seeks to restart the process in the interim period and to provide a response to MDC with respect to supporting the licence. MDC have been awaiting a response from Belfast City Council since November 2001 and are therefore keen to clarify the Council's position with respect to sharing the licence. Once clarified, Belfast City Council can work towards exploring options for realising the actual centre.

Over this interim period, Belfast City Council attended the MIPIM property exhibition in Cannes in March 2002. This is attended by over 10,000 exhibitors including global property developers such as MDC. The World Trade Centre Association (WTCA), who approve and manage World Trade Centre licences, also exhibit at Cannes and met with Belfast City Council representatives. They expressed their support for the establishment of a World Trade Centre in Belfast and offered to help Belfast City Council in exploring options for establishing a centre in the city.

They highlighted the fact that plans are well advanced for building a World Trade Centre in Dublin and expressed a keen interest to work with Belfast alongside Dublin, thus creating a linkage between the two, on the island of Ireland. At the time of writing, Belfast City Council were again contacted by the World Trade Association, who are now also working with the City of Edinburgh to establish a World Trade Centre. They are keen that these cities within the Cities of the Isles Partnership consult with each other and share experiences of developing the concept.

A further indication of interest and support was expressed by leading Friend of Belfast, Mr Rick Dimino, who is responsible for the largest US infrastructural project otherwise known as the 'Big Dig' in Boston. During Rick's recent visit to Belfast in March 2002, he offered to make a return visit and pledged to assist Belfast City Council, MDC and the WTCA to identify costed options for a centre in Belfast. It should be noted that Rick Dimino is actively involved in assisting with the Dublin World Trade Centre plans and was a lead player in the original team who established the World Trade Centre in Boston.

Way Forward

To date, Belfast City Council has agreed in principle to support the establishment of a World Trade Centre in Belfast. This was agreed at a meeting of the Economic Development Sub-Committee on 28th August, 2001.

It is clear from the research undertaken that there are major benefits from the acquisition of the World Trade Centre licence and operation of a World Trade Centre. These include:

- Economic return on licence fee through high numbers of annual business visitors and their related spend. (And an option to re-sell the licence).
- Greatly enhanced international image in the global marketplace.
- Direct route to investment opportunities through the World Trade Centre network for Belfast business.
- Clear focus on the marketing and promotion of Belfast as an investment location.
- Best practice example of a public/private partnership.
- A new World Trade Centre building could potentially provide a key anchor to the regeneration of downtown Belfast.
- The licence can be sold on and the initial investment recouped.

Council can choose to act in a catalytic way in this process by kickstarting this new venture. Council can also choose to create and participate in a small scale service delivery model at a relatively smaller resource implication, alone, or with partners.

Alternatively Council could opt to become more closely involved with a developer in building, owning and managing a World Trade Centre. Naturally there are also associated risks in property development, but the World Trade Centre record mitigate against this.

Members are therefore requested to accept the offer of assistance from Rick Dimino and the World Trade Centre Association, with a view to examining options for the establishing of a World Trade Centre in Belfast.

Members are also requested to agree payment of 50% of the initial licence fee and to hold the licence thereafter in partnership with the Multi Development Corporation.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable.

Resource Implications

£70,000 initial licence fee

£3,500 per annual membership fee from 2003 onwards

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members;

- i. note the report;
- ii. agree to buy into the WTC licence at 50% of the costs;
- iii. agree to work with Rick Dimino, the World Trade Centre

Association, and the Dublin consortium to develop options for Belfast, to be considered at a date in the near future.

Decision Required

To agree the foregoing recommendations.”

During discussion in the matter, the view was expressed that the World Trade Centres were located normally in the world's larger capital cities and, in view of its smaller population, it might not prove to be beneficial to establish a Centre in Belfast. Further Members suggested that, whilst they might contain a financial risk, opportunities would have to be taken to accrue benefits. The view was expressed also that a World Trade Centre was considered to be a prestigious asset and would assist in promoting the regeneration of the City.

After further discussion, the Sub-Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

China Links

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, subsequent to a visit to China by the former Lord Mayor (Councillor Stoker) and the former Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Economic Development Sub-Committee in April, 2000 and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Hefei during a reciprocal visit to Belfast in August, 2000, the Council's strategy for China had been developed. This had resulted in a number of links being established with universities and companies, with a further visit to Belfast in September, 2001 being led by Madam Wu, the Deputy Chairperson of the Peoples' Congress of China. This visit had led to a further invitation being received and accepted in respect of a return to visit to Hefei in September, 2002 by the Lord Mayor, the Chairman of the Sub-Committee and an officer of the Department.

The Head of Economic Initiatives reminded the Members also that the Belfast-based construction engineering company, Kirk McClure Morton, had developed strong and potentially productive links with the City of Hefei. In March, 2001, the Company had identified a business opportunity for rebuilding the City of Hefei's environmental infrastructure and had sought financial support from the Council in respect of the undertaking of a scoping study visit to that City with a view to developing a business proposal. The Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 7th March, 2001, had refused the request on the basis that it would represent direct subvention to a private sector company. However, in fulfilment of its civic role of an enabler in establishing trade contacts with China, the Council had provided the Company with two letters of support for submission to the Hefei Government.

The Head of Economic Initiatives reported that Kirk McClure Morton had recently provided the Department with updated information in respect of its business links with the City of Hefei and had identified an alternative potential source of financial aid under the auspices of a European initiative entitled the "Asia Urbs Programme". This made available grants of up to 500,000 Euros to promote co-operation between two European partners and one Asian partner in various aspects of urban environmental or infrastructural activities. However, the applications would have to be made through and be led by local authorities. The Company intended to submit a bid under the Programme and, to this end, had established links with a Danish company. It had confirmed that it would administer all the tasks in relation to the funding application

and

thereafter in respect of the project. The Head of Economic Initiatives put forward the view that the Council's involvement as a lead partner in this European Union proposal would heighten the profile of the City and enable a local company to engage in trade activity with China which was rapidly becoming one of the most significant global market places. In addition, the proposal would lead to increased employment for the Company and Belfast.

Accordingly, the Head of Economic Initiatives recommended that the Sub-Committee, in keeping with the Council's commitment within its China strategy, agree to support the request to act, in conjunction with Kirk McClure Morton, as a lead partner for the Asia-Urbs proposal.

After discussion, during which it was agreed that the possibility of benefits to be derived from the active involvement in the project of officers of the Department be investigated, the Sub-Committee adopted the recommendation.

Friends of Belfast

The Head of Economic Initiatives submitted a report in respect of the progress which had been achieved to date in expanding the Friends of Belfast initiative. A copy of the report, with the exception of the Appendix referred to therein, is set out hereunder:

"Purpose of Report

To advise Members of progress with respect to the Friends of Belfast initiative.

Background

Members will be aware that the Friends of Belfast initiative was first launched in February 1998 under Belfast City Council's Economic Development Strategy 1995-2000, in support of the Council's continued commitment to attracting inward investment to the City. It is a social capital organisation which fosters networking and partnerships with individuals of significant standing in professional sectors, who are prepared to promote business opportunities and investment links between Belfast and North America. To date, John Cullinane, founder of Friends of Belfast from the city of Boston has led the initiative in North America on behalf of Belfast City Council, enlisting the active support of key political and business figures. He has been supported by Belfast City Council's US consultant Dr Frank Costello.

Members will recall the approval of a Friends of Belfast strategy at their meeting of 2nd August, 2000. Within this strategy Belfast City Council agreed to consolidate the network in the existing cities of Boston and Pittsburgh and to further extend the network to other geographical areas of North America, by applying the same model

as has been developed successfully in Boston. It was agreed at

this time to expand the initiative into six US cities at a rate of two per year until 2003. The six cities were to be chosen for their sectoral strengths and the latter's compatibility with those of the Belfast economy.

Progress

In the past six months, extensive work has been undertaken with respect to the initiative. Outputs may be summarised as follows;

- i. Membership has grown to a current total of 110 active Members with a large concentration in the Massachusetts and East coast areas of North America. The potential of the upcoming mission formally launching the Friends of Belfast in New York, Denver and Pittsburgh, based on current responses from key influencers in all three cities, is likely to substantially increase that total number.
- ii. A new dynamic and interactive website has been developed, with special live bulletins, and webcam and map functions. The new site is located at www.friendsofbelfast.org and will go live during the month of May 2002.
- iii. High profile Friends have been identified as joint lead Friends with John Cullinane, who heads up the Boston network. They include Jim Lyons for the city of Denver assisted by Mayor Webb's official – Councillor Ed Thomas; John Connorton for the city of New York.
- iv. The Friends of Belfast initiative will be launched in the cities of New York and Denver on 18th, and 20th May respectively, during the Belfast City Council visit. To date, up to one hundred influential players from a variety of sectors have been identified and invited to attend each of the launches. New York has been targeted for its lead in the financial services, legal and creative industries sectors. Denver has been selected for its stance in the hi-tech and bio technology sectors
- v. A number of co-chairs have been identified and have agreed to actively commit to the Friends of Belfast initiative in the 4 main cities. They were selected for their sectoral experience, city influence and reputation and include the following individuals;

<u>Name</u>	<u>Lead player in sector</u>	<u>City</u>
John Connorton	Law	New York
Bob Johnston	E-commerce	New York
Michael Carey	(Government Aide to Mayor Bloomberg)	New York
Michael Flannery	Venture capital	New York
Jack Deacy	Government	New York
Mary Maguire	Investment funds	New York
Tim Sullivan	State Government – Finance	New York
Colleen Roche	Communications/Media	New York
Susan Morris	Energy	Denver
Rick Dimino	Infrastructure/masterplanning	Boston
Ted McConnell	Law – hi tech investments	Pittsburgh
John Kirkwood	Investment funds	Pittsburgh
Sr Michele O’Leary	Social/economic development	Pittsburgh
Dan Gallagher	Finance & Law	Pittsburgh

Note: Biographies of each individual co-chair have been attached as Appendix I of this report.

- vi. Consolidation of the model has taken place in Boston with the facilitation of regular working breakfast meetings hosted by John Cullinane. The latest held on 4th March attracting 22 friends led to a subsequent visit to Belfast by three key Boston Friends from 24th – 26th.
- vii. Three educational awareness visits to Belfast took place in the last few months by new and existing Friends of Belfast. They included a visit from 2 New York individuals (24th – 26th February 2002) 4 Boston individuals (24th – 26th February 2002) and 2 further Boston individuals (18th April 2002).

It should be noted that each of the individuals covered flight and accommodation costs personally.

The purpose of the visits was to update Friends on the Belfast product and to make them fully aware of political, economic, social and infrastructure developments, therefore equipping them to be better, more informed ambassadors for our City.

These brief visits led to a number of significant outputs to date:-

- * Participant and Friend Harry Grill from a leading Boston law firm has offered to sponsor a Friends of Belfast breakfast event during Belfast City Council’s visit there in May 2002. His law firm represents a number of key US-based life and health sciences companies with a view to locating in Europe. Harry can play a key role in facilitating visits by these companies to Belfast with

respect to establishing a base here.

- * The city of Denver through the offices of Mayor Webb and official Friends of Belfast assistant Councillor Ed Thomas have offered to cover all costs relating to the launch of the Friends of Belfast network in Denver on 20th May, 2002, to provide hospitality for the Belfast City Council delegation in May 2002.
- * Head Friend Mr Jim Lyons (former special NI Economic Advisor for Bill Clinton) will personally host an evening reception for the Belfast City Council group in May 2002 as an opportunity for the delegation to network with key players from the main sectors in the City of Denver.
- * Sr Michele O'Leary is currently co-ordinating a significant element of the Belfast visit to the city to examine Best Practice and initiate the Friends of Belfast network.
- * The Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh will sponsor a networking reception with key business and Government players from the City of Pittsburgh for the Belfast Group visit in May 2002.
- * Mr Rick Dimino, Director of the Boston 'Big Dig' project (the largest urban infrastructure project in North America) engaged with Belfast City Council in the recent series of BMAP lectures by delivering an address via video conference in November 2001.
- * Mr Dimino has subsequently committed to assisting Belfast City Council with a city masterplanning exercise. He has also offered to work with Belfast City Council and involve his World Trade Centre colleagues in helping to further Belfast City Council's research and plans with respect to establishing a World Trade Centre in Belfast.
- * Belfast City Council has developed closer links with the new Invest NI agency as a result of working with key individuals to facilitate the inward Friends visits. As a result Belfast City Council will be invited to participate on the agency's Strategic Planning process.

Conclusion

In light of ongoing efforts at global economic recovery, especially in the United States, it is important to consolidate and extend where practical our civic relations. Such relationships have proved to produce substantive economic and civic dividends over time. Arguably, this proactive approach is all the more important in

a context of global economic recession, combined with

international crises – it remains essential, therefore that Belfast markets itself aggressively and that Council continues to use the Friends of Belfast network in this regard.

A number of further developments are anticipated with respect to the Friends of Belfast in the near future. These include

- i) A reinvigoration of the Halifax, Nova Scotia network, particularly with the intention of exploring cultural tourism opportunities.
- ii) Establishment of a new rigorous monitoring and performance management framework for the initiative.
- iii) Facilitation of a bio science trade mission from Denver to Belfast in Autumn 2002.
- iv) Potential facilitation of a trade mission from Belfast to Denver in late 2002.

Environmental Implications

None.

Resource Implications

Retrospective attendance allowance for Members at the Friends of Belfast awareness events during the visits:- from 24th-26th February and 24th-26th March 2002.

Development Strategy Reference

4.1 Creating Prosperity in the City

To exploit all external links and networks such as the Friends of Belfast, to vigorously promote Belfast and its merit as an investment location.

Recommendation

It is recommended that;

- i. Members note the progress report

- i. **Approve the appointment of the following co-chairs for Friends of Belfast:**

**John Connorton
Bob Johnston
Michael Carey
Michael Flannery
Jack Deacy
Mary Maguire
Tim Sullivan
Colleen Roche
Susan Morris
Rick Dimino
Ted McConnell
John Kirkwood
Sr Michele O'Leary
Dan Gallagher**

- ii. **Approve payment in respect for Members' attendance at a number of events related to the recent Friends of Belfast product awareness visit to Belfast.**

Decision Required

To approve the foregoing recommendations."

After discussion, the Sub-Committee adopted the recommendations contained within the report.

Visit to the United States of America – May, 2002

The Sub-Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 5th December, 2001, it had agreed that a working visit be undertaken to Denver, Pittsburgh and New York in May, 2002 in order to expand and strengthen the Friends of Belfast networks and linkages with North America. In addition, at its meeting on 6th March, it had agreed that the Lord Mayor accept an invitation from Mayor Webb of Denver to accompany the delegation at the Denver stage of the visit.

The Economic Development Manager submitted a detailed itinerary for the visit, copies of which had previously been circulated, and highlighted the several important elements of the visit.

The Sub-Committee noted the information which had been supplied.