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**Democratic Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



2nd February, 2012

SPECIAL MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

*(To which all Members of the Council are invited to attend.)

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room (Room G05), City Hall on **Monday, 6th February, 2012 at 5.15 pm.**, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

PETER McNANEY

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. **Routine Matters**
 - (a) Apologies
 - (b) Declarations of Interest
2. **Presentation on Proposed Extension to University of Ulster Belfast Campus**
(Pages 1 - 4)
3. **Presentation on Conference/Convention Facilities at Belfast Waterfront Hall**
(Pages 5 - 10)

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Report to:	Special Development Committee
Subject:	Relocation of University of Ulster to Belfast City Centre
Date:	6 February 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	In 2006 the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) commissioned a report into the physical condition of the buildings at the University of Ulster (UU) Campus at Jordanstown. The report concluded that the main educational buildings were reaching the end of their useful life and were no longer fit for purpose as a modern educational establishment.
1.2	Following the condition survey a further study was undertaken to identify the preferred option for replacement facilities. DEL and Department of Finance & Personnel (DFP) subsequently approved a full business case which identified York Street as the most academically attractive and cost effective solution for replacement.
1.3	Since the completion of the business case the University has acquired a number of sites adjacent to its existing York Road campus, including the Interpoint building to facilitate the development of a new city centre campus. The project represents an investment of £250m in the area. The University have been awarded funding of £16m by DEL with the remainder being funded over a 25 year period from the University's income.
1.4	The Project Team has now completed the concept design for the new campus and wish to present the proposals to Elected Members as the first stage of an extensive engagement exercise in advance of submitting its planning application at the end of March 2012.
1.5	The University hopes to have full planning approval in place by late 2012. Contractors are expected to be appointed in mid 2013 with the new campus ready for occupation in 2018.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The relocation of the University of Ulster to the York Street area represents one of the biggest regeneration opportunities which the city is likely to see for decades to come.
2.2	Evidence from elsewhere would suggest the locating of a major anchor institution within a city centre presents the opportunity for substantial social, environmental and economic regeneration.
2.3	Should the planned relocation proceed, some 14,000 students and 2000 staff will be transferred to the York Street campus. The additional economic activity which will be generated has the potential to transform the economic future for this area of the city and present substantial benefits for communities in the vicinity of the campus and further afield.
2.4	The relocation will bring educational opportunities into the heart of the city centre. The project will bring with it a range of employment opportunities. The lead in period will present the potential for the Council, DEL and UU to support local communities to avail of employment opportunities both during the construction phase through social clauses and in the longer term.
2.5	In addition to employment opportunities within the University itself, the project will drive further commercial activity in the area, develop the night time economy and present real business opportunities for social enterprises in neighbouring areas through the provision of ancillary services.
2.6	The University is keen that its facilities will be accessible to local communities, helping build a strong and shared community and promote cultural and creative activity within the city.
2.7	<p>If the regenerative benefits of the project are to be fully realised it will be critical that the development connects and integrates with other developments within the north of the city and the city centre. These projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cathedral Quarter - Sailortown - Girdwood - North Cultural Corridor - Crumlin Road Jail - Royal Exchange
2.8	Whilst there are clear benefits to be gained from such a development it is recognised that a project of this scale will undoubtedly impact on communities across the city and in particular in those neighbourhoods closet to the development. The University recognises the need to take account of the aspirations and concerns of local communities and therefore is in the process of developing an extensive long term community engagement process. This is being led by Dr Duncan Morrow who has recently returned to the University following his term as Chief Executive at the Community Relations Council.



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Waterfront Hall Extension – Economic Appraisal
Date:	6 February 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, Ext 3470
Contact Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, Ext 3470

Relevant Background Information	
1.1	The Belfast Waterfront (the Waterfront) is a large purpose-built arts and entertainment centre which opened for business in 1997. It was constructed at a total cost of £37 million.
1.2	<p>The facilities offered within the existing building include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditorium of seating capacity in excess of 2,200; • Studio with a seating capacity of 380; • 20 small meeting rooms; • Two bars; • A Fully Licensed Restaurant; • A Gift Shop; and • A Box Office. <p>In addition to the above public space, the venue includes office space for staff; dressing rooms for performers; technical areas; and 2 small kitchens.</p>
1.3	The Waterfront is located on the banks of the River Lagan and adjacent to the Belfast Courts Complex, Hilton Hotel, and BT Tower in an area which is now considered a business hub within Belfast.
1.4	In 2008, Belfast City Council (BCC) commissioned a Feasibility Study for the development of a Convention Centre in Belfast. The key driver behind this Feasibility Study was that despite experiencing considerable success as a conference destination, the Waterfront was unable to attract a significant number of events from within their key target market i.e. the Association Conference

	Market. This study concluded that the provision of a larger conferencing facility in the City could attract additional conferences, resulting in significant economic benefits being realised.
1.5	In February 2011, BCC commissioned a Business Case to explore the feasibility of creating a link between the Waterfront and the vacant Level 0 and Level 1 at the Lanyon Quay Building.
1.6	The Business Case concluded that the development of a link bridge and the conversion of Levels 0 and Level 1 could potentially provide the venue with significant additional space, thereby providing the potential to attract large scale international conferences.
1.7	Following the completion of the Business Case, BCC commissioned RSM McClure Watters to complete a Full "Green Book" Economic Appraisal to consider the most appropriate option for the development of integrated conferencing facilities in Belfast.
1.8	RSM McClure Watters have been invited by the Committee to present their conclusions and recommendations.

	Key Issues
2.1	<p>The development of new/enhanced conferencing/convention facilities represents a significant opportunity to contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The promotion of business tourism within Belfast; •The development of Belfast as a prime tourism destination; •The economic growth of Belfast and the wider region; •Job creation; and •Urban regeneration
2.2	Specifically, the growth of the business tourism market is cited by both the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) Draft Tourism Strategy 2020 and BCC's Integrated Strategic Framework for Belfast Tourism as a key strategic priority and significant opportunity for the growth of Belfast and Northern Ireland over the next 10 years.
2.3	<p><u>Business Tourism</u></p> <p>Business Tourism is identified as a key growth area for the local economy over the next 10 years. It is considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resilient, sustainable and complements the leisure tourism sector; • to be at the high quality, high yield end of the tourism spectrum; • to create quality, year-round employment opportunities; • that investments in business tourism facilities lead to the regeneration of urban and inner city areas; • that business tourism stimulates future inward investment as business people see the attractions of a destination while travelling on business or to attend a conference, exhibition or incentive, and then return to establish business operations there.

2.4	<p><u>Overview of the National Conferencing Market</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are circa 12,000 International Conferences hosted annually, 375 of which were located in the UK in 2010, none of which were hosted in Belfast; • Research by the British Association of Conference Destinations (BACD) in 2006 identified that 2,509 associations regularly hold events. 1,208 (48%) hold a conference as their major annual event. A further 804 (32%) describe their main annual event as a meeting or AGM. An additional 153 associations hold a variety of annual events that range from lunches and dinners to festivals, ceremonies and presentations; • A total of 63 opportunities have been lost by the City and by the Waterfront directly over the period 2008 – 2011 due to a lack of appropriate facilities (Source: BVCB/Waterfront); and • Consultations with Professional Conference Organisers (PCO"s) and Associations have indicated that should adequate facilities be in place they would be willing to bring conferences to Belfast
2.5	<p><u>Need for Additional/Enhanced Conference Facilities in Belfast</u></p> <p>Since 2008 there has been a significant decline in the number of conferences hosted in Belfast with the number of national and international conferences has declined by 93% and 71% respectively over the period 2008-2010. In total the number of conferences hosted in the city has decreased by 92% in that period. In addition to the citywide decline, the number of conferences hosted at the Waterfront over the last 3 years has decreased by circa 36%. The corporate market has stayed largely consistent during this period, with the largest decline in the GB and International Association market, which has seen a 59% decrease.</p> <p>Stakeholder consultation has indicated that the key reasons for this decline is the lack of appropriate facilities in the city. As the Waterfront is the largest and most popular venue, the issues highlighted with this venue include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is insufficient exhibition space available on site. Exhibition space requirements range from 1,500 sq/m to 5,000 sq/m (3,000 delegate conference); • The exhibition space that is available is split over 3 levels, which is not appropriate for the majority of exhibitions; • There is a lack of appropriate sized breakout space at the venue also; and • There is no banqueting facility available on site, which some associations prefer. As with exhibitions, in the past the Waterfront has offer St George's Market as a potential location for exhibitions, but as it is a separate building a short distance from the plenary sessions, this has been poorly received. <p>Given the above constraints, the following requirements were identified by those consulted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An integrated convention centre with a clear span exhibition space across one level with a minimum of 2,000 sq/m; • A minimum of 5 rooms that can accommodate breakout that can accommodate larger groups i.e. 200 plus; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Banqueting space that can accommodate up to 750 people.
2.6	<p><u>Project Objectives</u></p> <p>The aims for this project are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an integrated conference/convention centre solution in Belfast; Position Belfast as a premium destination for National and International Conferences; Utilise the development of business tourism in Belfast as a catalyst for wider economic growth across the City; The creation of jobs at the new facility and to create and sustain jobs across the city of Belfast; Exploit the Bleisure“tourism market through increasing return visits to Belfast of Business Visitors; To improve the sustainability/growth of the local hotel market; and Improve the profile, perception and image of Belfast as a City. <p>The objectives of this project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2015, provision of an integrated conference/convention centre in Belfast which offers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of 2,000 sq/m exhibition space across one level (2010 Baseline: 520sq/m); Banqueting space for a minimum of 750 people (2010 Baseline: 450sq/m) ; Breakout provision for a minimum of 5 groups of 200 (2010 Baseline: 3 Rooms over 100); To attract 50,000 annual conference delegates to the City by 2020 (2010 Baseline: 25,000); To attract 35,000 (of the 50,000) out-of-state conference delegates by 2020 (2010 Baseline: 5,750); To host an average of 6 National Large Association conferences per annum from 2020 (Baseline: 1 Annually); and To host an average of 6 International/European Association conferences per annum from 2020 (Baseline: one every 2 Years)
2.7	<p>The consultants have examined for options as part of the appraisal, those options being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Do nothing; (ii) Link to Lanyon Quay; (iii) Extension over service yard; (iv) Extension over service yard with additional space.
2.8	<p>The option appraisal also considers the potential operating model for the new facility.</p>
2.9	<p>A summary document on the Economic Appraisal will be made available to Members on the night.</p>

Resource Implications	
3.1	The total capital cost for the project is anticipated net to exceed £20m. An application for funding of £2m has been made to the NITB Tourism Development Scheme and a further application is being prepared for a £10m application to the European Regional Development Fund. The capital cost to the Council is not expected to exceed £8.
3.2	It is projected, however, that the reduction in the deficit funding required for the Waterfront Hall in the future will reduce significantly as a result of this investment.

Equality and Good Relations Implications	
4.1	None.

Recommendations	
5.1	Members are asked to consider the conclusions and recommendations of the report and agree to officers bringing forward an implementation plan and associated timetable in due course.

Decision Tracking	
6.1	The Director of Development will bring forward a further report in early March 2012.

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