

Document Pack

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



1st February, 2013

MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman / Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room (Room G05), City Hall on Tuesday, 5th February, 2013 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) Minutes
 - (c) Declarations of Interest
 - (d) Change of Membership – Lagan Rural Partnership
2. Belfast Visitor and Convention Board - Presentation (Pages 1 - 118)
3. City Access Strategy (Pages 119 - 124)
4. City Events Programme (Pages 125 - 128)
5. World Police and Fire Games - Volunteer Accreditation (Pages 129 - 132)
6. Increasing Benefits Uptake - Consultation (Pages 133 - 188)

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
Date:	Tuesday 5 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members are aware that Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau submit their Business Plan annually to Development Committee for approval. The plan covers the leisure marketing and business tourism activity undertaken by BVCB, visitor servicing carried out by BWC in the city centre and at the two airports. This occurs January / February to ensure that budgets and activity are in place by March to allow BVCB to plan activity from the 1 April 2013.
1.2	BVCB's plan for 2013/14 is attached as Appendix 1. Members should note that this is the final year of a three year strategic plan agreed by Development Committee in 2011. More detailed plans for the Belfast Welcome Centre and Airport TIC's are available from the Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager ext 3586.
1.3	The plan outlines key performance in the first three quarters of 2012/13 on pages 10 – 11. Some specific examples of success to date, include securing 56 cruise ships for 2013, exceeding income targets from private sector partners, securing conferences worth £19.1 million for the city and dealing with 451,555 enquiries via the 3 TICs. Areas under-performing include advertising equivalent from PR due to the lag time between press visits and coverage (therefore likely to reach targets by year end); and value of accommodation booking fees from conferences - delegates tend to negotiate better rates directly with hotels as there is no commission. Overall however, as reported to Committee on a quarterly basis, BVCB's performance has remained on target for 2012/13 period.
1.4	The plan proposes targets and KPI's for 2013/14 on pages 6 – 9. Key initiatives for 2013 include the relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre and servicing the World Police and Fire Games. In summary, through implementing this Business Plan, BVCB will deliver 312,000 bednights and visitors for Belfast City generating £60 million spend in the local economy.

1.5	The overall budget is £3.8 million of which £1,827,465 is requested from Council. This represents a leverage of 1:1.09 and return on investment of 1:16. BCC's core contribution is £15,000 less than 2012/13 as one of the initiatives, About Belfast guide, was included in Council's efficiency programme in 2011; on the basis that this publication could attract commercial sponsorship / advertising and reduce public funding subvention.
1.6	The 2013/14 Business Plan has been developed with input from Council officers. It is aligned to the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010 – 2014, contributing to Council's overall targets to grow visitor numbers by 20% and spend by 40% by 2014.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Committee received a presentation from NITB and Tourism Ireland in December 2012. One of the key issues discussed included the decline in the GB market and the emerging research on market segments.
2.2	Members agreed to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between BCC/ BVCB, NITB and Tourism Ireland around marketing Belfast as a visitor destination. BCC is taking the lead on this. Following the BVCB meeting on Thursday 24 January 2013, BVCB Chairman and Chief Executive met with the Director of Development, the Head of Economic and International Development and the Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager to agree a process and timetable for the development of a MOU and an association Action Plan. The aim is to complete this exercise by end of May 2013.
2.3	As part of this process BVCB and BCC will analyse the new research on NI/GB/ROI segments undertaken by both NITB and Tourism Ireland. We will assess how well the city's product fits each segment, identify gaps and finalise key messages and an Action Plan for 2013 and beyond.
2.4	Members will be aware of BCC/BVCB's current Backin' Belfast campaign to help drive footfall back into the city. However there is also a need to look at the medium and long term actions to restore confidence in the market place and safeguard conference, cruise and tour operator bookings. BVCB has agreed to review activity on an ongoing basis throughout 2013 and respond as appropriate. Activity in the plan may change and BVCB require the flexibility to respond to the marketplace. KPI's will remain constant.
2.5	The relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre is a priority in BVCB's plan and the Council's Investment Programme. £1.8 million has been secured from SP&R and EU ERD funding. Plans have now been developed and the procurement of contractors has commenced. Negotiations around current and new leases are ongoing.
2.6	Finally, BVCB will undergo a rebranding exercise in 2013 and after consultation and research with stakeholders and members, the Board of BVCB has agreed on the name Visit Belfast. This will also be used for the new BWC.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	BVCB is requesting £1,827,465 towards 13/14 plan. This has been included in departmental estimates.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	None.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Committee agree support towards BVCB in 2013/14 and will monitor progress against targets on a quarterly basis.
5.2	BCC will lead on developing an MOU with Tourism Ireland and NITB.
5.3	BVCB will respond to the segmentation analysis, MOU and impact of the flag protests as appropriate.

6	Decision Tracking
MOU to be drafted by end of May 2013	
Shirley McCay	

7	Key to Abbreviations
BVCB	Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
NITB	Northern Ireland Tourist Board
TIL	Tourism Ireland Limited
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
TIC	Tourism Information Centre

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1.	

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Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
Business Plan
2013 - 2014

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BVCB MARKETING AND VISITOR SERVICING PLAN 2011-2014

Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB) is Belfast's destination marketing organisation. Its core purpose is to "create and service visitors for Belfast in order to generate economic benefit for the City region".

BVCB's main funders are Belfast City Council (BCC), the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and additional funding levered from the private sector and its 468 members. Belfast City Council is by far the major funder, contributing £1.8 million in 2012/13 and accounting for 50% of all income. BVCB generates a further £1.4 million, 40% of income, from membership, sponsorship and commercial activities, followed by NITB contributing £359,251 (10% of income).

Two years ago, BVCB prepared a three year strategic business plan, for the period 2011/12-2013/14. The plan was accepted by BVCB's main funders and stakeholders, and set out the overall direction and priorities for the three year period. Therefore, this business plan details the priorities and activity to be undertaken in the third year of this three year strategy.

These priorities have been the drivers of activity within BVCB since 2011 and are briefly summarised below, in order to provide insight into the strategic framework established and approved for BVCB.

The business plan recognised that BVCB has finite resources and must focus on priority opportunities, to fulfil its key objectives of generating new visitors to the city and increasing bed nights. BVCB's business strategy should therefore focus on developing Belfast as:

- A major European City Break destination
- The leading convention destination in Ireland

Key Priorities of 2011-2014 Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan

The **priority opportunities** for BVCB should be **City Breaks and Discretionary Business Tourism**, and the focus of BVCB's marketing activity should be on **driving up visitor nights**. Whilst the primary focus should be on generating overnights, the "day tripper" market is still recognised as an important economic generator, and so marketing activity *may* be designed to attract the day tripper market, but should always include an overnight message.

City Break marketing should **focus on its potential to generate bednights** and increase occupancy, with focus on the **key markets** of Republic of Ireland, Great Britain and Europe (through Tourism Ireland), and particularly markets with direct air or sea access. The key drivers of City Breaks are entertainment, arts, culture and historic sites.

<p><i>BVCB's activities over the last two years have been consistent with these objectives. BVCB has restructured its Leisure Tourism, Marketing and Communications team and appointed a Campaigns Manager and Digital Manager. Significant success has been achieved from its integrated multi platform campaigns and marketing activity in generating overnights, day trips and spend for the City.</i></p>
<p>BVCB should focus on attracting conferences which require citywide services, thus addressing increased bed-night capacity and reduced occupancy within the city. The Business Plan emphasises increased engagement with industry to develop "saleable" propositions.</p> <p><i>BVCB has restructured Business Tourism and actively targeted larger conferences with significant success. However, at the request of industry and in agreement with its stakeholders, attention has now broadened to also include smaller events and conferences.</i></p>
<p>Performance measures used for reporting to stakeholders should be improved, in line with measures used by other international membership organisations.</p> <p><i>BVCB developed a set of 20 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in 2012-2013 upon which the company performance is measured by the Board and key stakeholders. Monitoring, measurement and evaluation techniques have been refined and developed on an ongoing basis.</i></p>
<p>A "flying squad" approach should be developed (as required), engaging with industry to identify opportunities for short-term support initiatives e.g. when forward bookings are low, in response to exchange rate variations, recent Christmas campaign etc.</p> <p><i>Later in the report there are specific examples of how both Leisure Tourism and Business Tourism teams have developed specific short term initiatives in response to industry requests and needs.</i></p>

1.2 BVCB BUSINESS PLAN 2013-2014

BVCB is now approaching the end of the second year of its 3 year strategic plan; this document presents the operational business plan for the final year of the strategy (2013-2014). Developed within the context of the 2011-2014 three year strategy, the purpose of the 2013-2014 operational business plan is to present a detailed, integrated plan of the activities, management, resources and monitoring required to ensure delivery of the 3rd and final phase of the 2011-2014 Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan. This 3rd year plan also builds upon the operational plan prepared by Dr John Heeley for the year 2012-2013.

However, the Plan is also set against the back drop of the very specific challenges created by the recent civil unrest and protests in the City, which have been on a level not seen for many years. This unrest has already severely damaged the city image and reputation, due to the international media coverage of the protests, and has the potential to undermine the progress and growth achieved in 2012.

The most worrying aspect is that confidence in the City as a tourism destination is being tested amongst conference organisers, group tour operators, cruise ship operators and the international community, as evidenced by the number of enquiries generated for January 2013. Indeed, BVCB has already been asked by to put forward a proposal for a short term plan specifically aimed at stimulating footfall and spend over the first Quarter of 2013, by rebuilding confidence, civic pride and counter the negative effects of the disturbances.

An over-arching theme of the 2013/14 Business plan must therefore be to reinforce and rebuild confidence in the City amongst the key decision makers and influencers within target tourism markets – ensuring that any business already booked is retained and new business continues to grow into the City. In addition to the strong sales focus inherent in BVCB's plans, customer relationship management will become all the more imperative to rebuild confidence, and so direct one-on-one contact with influencers and channels will be important along with strong communications plans. This emphasis will be evident across BVCB's activities in 2013/14.

1.2.1 PURPOSE OF THE 2013- 2014 BUSINESS PLAN

The business plan for 2013-2014 will:

- (i) Review the organisation's progress to date in achieving the objectives set out in the 2011 -2014 plan and the further refinements adopted in the 2012-2013 operational plan.
- (ii) Set out clearly the operational action plans required to deliver on the targets in the 3-year business plan, including budget and performance reporting implications;
- (iii) Highlight additional activity required to address new market challenges and opportunities that have arisen since the 2011-2014 business plan was developed;
- (iv) Ensure that the key performance indicators used to monitor and track operational efficiency and progress towards objectives are robust and continue to deliver accurate measurement of outcomes achieved.

This business plan is, therefore, operational in its focus, given that the strategic context has already been agreed and established.

In addition to its role as an internal management tool for the Board of Directors, CEO and Senior Management Team of BVCB, the 2013-2014 operational plan is the necessary basis of any funding agreement between BVCB and its core funder Belfast City Council (BCC) and its other main funder, Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB).

1.2.2 KEY ACTIVITIES AND THEMES OF THE 2013-2014 BUSINESS PLAN

The activities and themes presented below will be delivered within the context of the possible loss of confidence and damaging impact of the current civil unrest to all target markets. Having made significant progress throughout 2012, BVCB now recognises that this progress has been threatened and its challenge in 2013-2014 will be to redress and overcome any negative perceptions that have been generated.

The incoming year will see a number of major planned projects reach fruition.

In Visitor Servicing, the major projects to be undertaken are:

- The relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre (BWC).
- Provision of accommodation booking and visitor servicing for the World Police and Fire Games (WPFPG).
- Development of the 2nd Phase of the Belfast Visitor Pass.

Efficient management of visitor servicing resources will be a priority throughout the year, but particularly in the run-up to and during the World Police & Fire Games in August 2013, and in light of future reduced NITB funding for Visitor Servicing.

For Leisure Tourism, the focus in 2013 will be to build on the successful partnerships which generate and lever significant marketing budgets for the City, ensuring the delivery of effective, coordinated and integrated marketing. The team will work closely with and integrate Belfast City Marketing Plans with NITB and Tourism Ireland and will also influence their activity by providing Belfast specific messages, images and city brand themes.

Leisure Tourism has also identified a number of additional areas of key activity which will drive its 2013-2014 operational plans:

- Adopt and utilise the new segmentation research from NITB / Tourism Ireland in all BVCB leisure marketing communications, shifting the focus from marketing products, to developing compelling experience propositions and distinctive visitor experiences that match the needs, interests and motivations of the prioritised segments.
- Working with partners to deliver targeted campaign activity in all key geographic markets.
- Utilising BVCB's in-house expertise in digital marketing and communications to build online presence to address the new priority segments.
- Position Belfast as a must visit port of call on the island of Ireland and maximise the impact of cruise tourism to the region.

In Business Tourism, the conference team focus will be on continuing its targeted sales approach and best prospect sales drive, embedding the new systems, structures and sales culture recently put in place, following a period of re-organisation and change. Key projects and initiatives will include:

- Launch of a new corporate ambassador programme and promotion of Belfast as a conference and meetings destination within the corporate market.
- A review of commercial income opportunities and initiatives for Business Tourism to maximise private sector investment from industry based members.
- Development of a joint sales and marketing plan with the Belfast Waterfront to launch the new 2016 extension and secure new city-wide business for the venue.
- Further development of the new conference industry taskforce to increase sales for the city and increase industry engagement and participation.

Membership is the cornerstone of BVCB and a renewed focus on membership retention, engagement and growth will underpin the company's operations during 2013-2014. A review of the current membership scheme has recently been undertaken and a new membership manager appointed.

1.2.3 BUSINESS PLAN STRUCTURE

This business plan is structured as follows:

BVCB Business Plan Structure 2013 - 2014
<p>Section 2 re-states the core activities of BVCB, outlining areas where strategic focus has been re-aligned according to recommendations in the Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan for 2011 -2014.</p> <p>A summary of the most recent key tourism performance statistics for Belfast is also included, highlighting overall BVCB's contribution towards securing visitors and bed-nights for the City.</p> <p>Section 2 concludes with a review of the organisation's performance since the development of the 3 year strategic plan, against its key performance indicators.</p>
<p>Section 3 outlines BVCB's strategic priorities for 2013-2014. Each of the key strategic projects for the final year of its Business Plan is discussed in detail.</p>
<p>Section 4 presents the detailed operational plans for each core area of activity within BVCB.</p>
<p>Section 5 provides details of BVCB's income and expenditure and will detail the assumptions upon which the projections have been based.</p>
<p>Section 6 sets out BVCB's 2013 - 2014 targets and the monitoring and measurement systems in place to track and report on performance.</p>

2. BVCB PROGRESS TO DATE AGAINST OBJECTIVES

2.1 BVCB CORE ACTIVITIES

Established in 1999, BVCB is the official tourism marketing agency for the Belfast City Region, dedicated to promoting Belfast as a city break, conference, cruise ship and day trip destination and is responsible for the operation of three gateway tourist information centres.

Its core activities are broadly categorised below.

2.1.1 LEISURE TOURISM

BVCB's leisure tourism focus is on marketing Belfast as a city break, cruise and day trip destination, with the specific objective of increasing overnight visitors and generating spend for the City.

In 2011, more than half all visits to Belfast (53%) were for a city break, short break or holiday; generating 47% of all overnight tourism spend, confirming the importance of this sector to BVCB's marketing plans.

Whilst BVCB's focus is to increase overnight stays, the day trip market will in the short term continue to be an important element of the tourism economy and our marketing plan. The key objective will be encouraging traditional day trip visitors into overnight stays. The opening of Titanic Belfast and the 2012 programme of events presented an unprecedented opportunity to increase day trips and overnight stays through integrated marketing, sales and communications activity.

BVCB continued to work in a coordinated and cohesive way with NITB, Tourism Ireland and commercial partners to deliver integrated campaigns with a strong Belfast focus in all the priority target markets to maximise the benefits of a momentous 2012 year.

The Cruise Belfast partnership continues to deliver success through promotion of Belfast as a port of call for Cruise Ship operators.

2.1.2 BUSINESS TOURISM

Historically, BVCB has been responsible for generating business tourism for Belfast from national and international associations, whilst NITB had responsibility for the corporate and incentive categories. Following the recommendations in the 2011-2014 Business Plan, BVCB's conference team has been focused to a much greater extent on targeting larger scale conference business which has citywide accommodation requirements (i.e. conferences that use the services of more than one hotel/venue).

However, over the course of the last year and at the request of the private sector membership, it was agreed with the key funders that BVCB should also seek to develop smaller scale conference business for the city. This new approach will see 80% of Business Tourism sales originating from large scale 'city-wide' events generating at least 600 bed nights with approximately 20% derived from smaller conferences with at least 100 bed nights.

Business Tourism has also re-organised its activities to ensure a more sales focused approach, involving rigorous prospect and pipeline management to focus on maximising conversion rates and driving new business for the city.

2.1.3 VISITOR SERVICING

Visitor servicing has been a core activity of BVCB since 2000. BVCB manages the Belfast Welcome Centre; two gateway airport based Tourist Information Centres (TICs) at Belfast International Airport (since 2005) and George Best Belfast City Airport (since 2007) on behalf of NITB and BCC, and various outreach and industry engagement activities.

The visitor servicing element of BVCB faces significant change over the incoming year, with the relocation of the Welcome Centre to a new ground floor city centre location, an accompanying change of name, the introduction of new technology and a new modus operandi, development of Phase 2 of the Belfast Visitor Pass, and handling accommodation bookings for the World Police and Fire Games. Detailed planning for these major changes has been required throughout the current year, in addition to the “normal business” of managing the 3 TICs.

These developments will be critical to implementing the recommendations arising from a Strategic Review undertaken in 2012 into BVCB’s Visitor Servicing, which recommended a ‘hub and spoke’ approach to visitor servicing, with a new Welcome Centre as the core ‘hub’ and the satellite airport TICs, distributed local information centres and information points, and new technologies providing an outreach function.

The airport TICs are also facing reduced funding from NITB, and must find alternative funding sources and develop a sustainable funding model for 2014/15 onwards.

2.2 BELFAST VISITOR PERFORMANCE

The most recent full year Belfast Tourism Monitor Report (BTM) pertains to 2011. Findings indicate a slight decline across a number of key performance indicators, particularly in relation to the total number of visitor trips to Belfast. Whilst the total number of out-of-state overnight visitors remained static in 2011, the total number of overnight visitors increased, emphasising the importance of the domestic market. The number of out-of-state day visitors also declined slightly in 2011 as did out-of-state expenditure, although total day trips and expenditure were almost on a par with 2010.

Belfast Tourism Monitor Report – Key Statistics		
	2011	2010
Total Number of Visitor Trips	7.9 million	8 million
Total Tourism Expenditure	£401 million	£387 million
Total Overnight Visitor Trips	1.6 million	1.3 million
Number of out-of-state overnight visitors	1.33 million	1.33 million

Total Overnight Expenditure	£168 million	£219 million
Out-of-state overnight expenditure	£128 million	£190 million
Total day trippers	6.3 million	6.4 million
Out of state day visitors	1.4 million	1.7 million
Total day visitor expenditure	£233 million	£236 million
Out of state day visitor expenditure	£88 million	£113 million

Source: Belfast Tourism Monitor 2010 and 2011

Half year figures for 2012, from the Belfast Tourism Monitor, welcomed a return to growth in terms of out of state visitors to Belfast, up 14% compared to the same period in 2011. Pure holiday visitors (PHVs) continue to drive these numbers, representing three fifths of overnight trips, and undoubtedly curiosity and the 'Titanic' effect with the centenary commemorations and the opening of Titanic Belfast being a major factor.

BVCB also subscribes to the STR Global's monthly analysis of hotel room occupancy and sales statistics. The information presented below is very timely and current, providing a barometer of how tourism is faring throughout the year. Backing up the indications of the BTM half year figures, 2012 statistics are very positive, illustrating average occupancy of 75% in Belfast hotels in the year to date (November 2012)¹.

The STR Global statistics for Belfast are collated from feedback from 38 hotels in Greater Belfast with a combined stock of 3,575 rooms.

Belfast Hotel Accommodation Performance			
	Year to 30 Nov 10	Year to 30 Nov 11	Year to 30 Nov 12
Hotel Occupancy %	64.8	66.3	75.1
RevPar* £	36.17	35.36	41.43
Demand	739,610	784,470	896,958
Supply	1,034,356	1,077,680	1,086,800

As shown, performance within the hotel sector has been strong in 2012, across a range of measures. Consistently up throughout the year, with double digit increases between April and October, monthly hotel occupancy levels peaked in August 2012 at 88.7%, compared with 78.2% in the same month the previous year.

The revenue per available room also increased, indicating that hoteliers have not only achieved higher occupancy, but have increased the yield per available room.

STR Global's analysis also includes some benchmark comparison with a number of other City Break destinations:

¹ STR Global 2012 (produced by destination research company Smith Travel Research).

Comparative Occupancy Figures for European City Break Destinations 2011 & 2012		
	Year to date Nov 11 (%)	Year to Nov 12 (%)
Belfast	65.9	75.1
Liverpool	71	69.6
Cardiff	68.9	68.9
Bristol	73.5	73.7
Dublin	73.2	76.3
Cork	76.3	77.2
Bratislava	47.1	51.8
Tallinn	65.3	64.9
York	80.5	79.9

Of the 9 cities included in the analysis, Belfast has performed well on occupancy, with the fourth highest occupancy levels within the comparative group and on a similar par to Dublin.

2.3 BVCB PERFORMANCE AGAINST KPIS

- 2.3.1 The establishment of credible and reliable systems to report on the performance of Belfast as a city break and conference destination was a key recommendation of the 2011-2014 Business Plan which set out BVCB's key performance indicators for the first year to 31st March 2012. The subsequent year 2 operational plan prepared by Dr John Heeley modified these into a set of 20 KPIs upon which the organisation's performance was to be evaluated. BVCB's 2012-2013 Business Plan recommended increased focus on performance management against the annual KPIs. See Appendix I for Performance Against 2012/13 Key Performance Indicators.
- 2.3.2 As 2013-14 is the final year of the 3 year Business Plan, particular attention is being given to how BVCB has performed against the priorities and objectives set to date. The following sub-sections analyse BVCB's progress on key initiatives and KPIs for each of the organisation's core activities: leisure tourism, business tourism, membership and visitor servicing.

New Company Name

The 2012-2013 Operational Plan recommended that BVCB should change its name as an indicator of BVCB's realignment and new and shared sense of purpose and mission. This is an organisation-wide initiative; its implementation is being led by the Marketing and Communications team. Research and consultation has been undertaken, and the Board has endorsed the decision that BVCB will change its name to "Visit Belfast" from April 2013. The new name will more accurately reflect the organisation's core purpose and should resonate with greater impact with the organisation's many and varied stakeholders.

Leisure Tourism

Since the 2011-2014 Business Plan, Marketing and Communications have now been merged within Leisure Tourism, led by the Director of Marketing and Communications. This significant restructuring has facilitated greater co-ordination between marketing and communications activities, resulting in fully integrated campaigns across a range of channels and platforms. Leisure Tourism has quickly adapted to new web and digital media opportunities and challenges by developing in-house competence and skills, and is already implementing with success, multi-level marketing campaigns comprising of integrated offline and online channels.

Website and Digital Media

The Marketing and Communications team has been strengthened by the recent appointment of a dedicated manager and an executive in this specialist and essential area, ensuring the full optimisation of new digital communication channels to engage with users in an appropriate and highly targeted way.

Considerable investment has been made in the gotoBelfast.com website, to develop applications, tools and functionality which put the visitor at the centre of site content. This investment has also included updated convention and cruise industry websites. Work is nearing completion on a corporate and member site.

The new websites have performed very well in engaging users, consistently exceeding the KPI target of 59,000 unique visitors per month. Tracking and monitoring analysis undertaken by the Marketing and Communications team shows that the mobile version of gotoBelfast.com accounts for 20% of web traffic and is continuing to grow.

BVCB has also strengthened Belfast's digital presence on main social media sites including Facebook and Twitter, with more than 65,000 combined followers and fans.

The production of monthly product and consumer e-zines, in tandem with list building and contact management, remains an integral part of all leisure tourism activity.

Belfast City Break Campaigns

The fastest growing sector of leisure tourism over recent years is the city break market. BVCB has undertaken targeted, tactical activity in the key markets of NI, ROI and GB, working with commercial partners, Tourism Ireland and NITB, and has successfully achieved matched income targets totalling £352,501 representing 57% commercial partner contribution. In addition, £100,000 in-kind-support was provided by easyJet (Belfast presence on easyJet homepage and weekly e-shot):

Great Britain: Four cooperative campaigns targeting six cities were undertaken at key periods through out the year utilising a multi-platform approach, from traditional to online and digital channels:

- Stena /Tourism Ireland/BVCB: Spring/ Summer campaign for Scotland
- Flybe/Tourism Ireland/BVCB: September campaign Manchester, Birmingham Glasgow and Edinburgh

- Aer Lingus/Tourism Ireland/BVCB October campaign for London
- Easyjet/BVCB/Tourism Ireland Pre-Christmas Campaign for Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham Glasgow and Edinburgh

The impact of these campaigns is currently being evaluated through independent research (by Millward Brown Ulster). The Spring campaign generated a combined return of £1:£17.2 (BVCB part funding generated a return of £1:£54), generated an estimated 20,278 bednights and £1.6 million spend to the local economy. Therefore, this first campaign alone delivered almost 30% of BVCB's bednight targets for GB campaigns in 2012-2013 and 27% of the target visitor spend target for the same period.

NI / ROI: Partner campaigns were undertaken in September-October 2012 with Belfast Festival at Queens and November-December with Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, DSD, Victoria Square, CastleCourt, Titanic Belfast and Translink. These campaigns achieved a matched income of £150,000 from commercial partners. The November-December Christmas campaign represented the largest partnership campaign undertaken to date, indicating the success of BVCB's role in coordinating and integrating city marketing. These campaigns are currently being evaluated by Millward Brown Ulster.

Cruise Ship Visits

Belfast is now the fifth most popular cruise port in the UK and number three in Ireland. BVCB's current and future strategy in relation to cruise ship sales is focused on exploiting the position of Dublin as the Marquee Port for the island of Ireland, with the aspiration of positioning Belfast as the second most visited port on the island.

BVCB works in partnership with Belfast Harbour to deliver on its cruise ship targets, through the Cruise Belfast partnership. During the consultation process, Belfast Harbour was keen to emphasise the very crucial role played by BVCB in its professional and proactive approach to selling Belfast as a cruise ship destination.

Belfast's booked cruise calls for 2013 represent a significant level of growth from 2012 and particularly 2011 (when Belfast welcomed 32 ships) providing a sound platform for future growth and an increase of market share. BVCB's target was to secure 50 cruise ship visits for 2013, equating to a total of 80,000 day visits by passengers and crew and spend of £3.5 million. Subject to confirmation, 56 cruise ships are scheduled to dock in Belfast in 2013, equating to an estimated 114,000 passengers/crew and a potential economic impact of £6m for the local economy.

Leisure Tourism Publications

BVCB produced a range of high quality printed material for marketing, sales and visitor servicing, including the annual Belfast Visitor Guide, the bi-monthly About Belfast guide, Titanic Belfast 2012 guide and leaflet, Belfast TIC and visitor maps and new Cruise Belfast brochure.

Advertising revenue is generated from the Belfast Visitor guide and About Belfast publications - the combined target income for 2012-2013 is £60,000. To date, over £42,000 has been generated and the target is expected to be achieved.

The About Belfast publication is regarded as the official visitor guide to Belfast, with an ABC classification (Audit Bureau's Classification) of 58,333 copies on average per edition (6 editions per year), making it the highest distributed free consumer magazine in Northern Ireland. About Belfast is also available in digital formats, downloadable from gotoBelfast.com; gotobelfast app and iBooks.

BVCB has dramatically reduced the quantities of literature being produced in recent years, ensuring that it maximises the utilisation of digital and online media. BVCB recognises that traditional versions of publications will continue to have a reduced role in its marketing and sales activities, however there continues to be a demand for a limited range of printed publications for both trade and consumer markets. This area is constantly under review.

Communications Activity

Communications and PR continues to support and enhance all BVCB marketing and sales activity in its key markets. The activity is both corporate and consumer facing – corporate to represent the interests of the organisation and its funders and stakeholders; consumer to enhance the profile of Belfast and stimulate visits and spend.

Given the high profile of the 2012 year, the target for advertising equivalence value was set at £4m to reflect the potential higher interest in the destination and level of media activity. Through the organisation of media briefings, press visits and engagements, together with sustained distribution of press and information releases to worldwide media, including the handling of all press information enquiries relating to Belfast, BVCB is confident that this stretching target will be met.

Travel Trade Activity

With the increasing importance of the leisure market to Belfast for overnight stays, Tour Operator business has gained in importance over the past couple of years, driving room sales and contributing to occupancy levels across the city. To date, evaluation has indicated that leads generated from sales calls and trade shows attended in 2012 have produced an estimated 87,000 bednights for the city.

During 2012/2013 the Sales team will attend a total of 16 trade shows, exhibitions and other events relating to leisure tourism with a target of 180 travel trade leads. To date 152 Active sales leads have been generated: 15% have existing tours to Belfast, 27% visit Northern Ireland but do not stay in Belfast; 17% are considering Belfast for 2014 and 41% visit ROI but not NI. The challenge here is to constantly communicate with all prospects through sales calls, e-zines and updates, and to actively network and convert those Group Tour Operators (GTOs) considering Belfast into actual bookings and those GTO's not yet visiting to actively consider Belfast by presenting compelling and tailored itinerary ideas.

Flying Squad Engagement with Industry

The 3 year plan recommended a 'flying squad' approach to respond to immediate industry needs.

BVCB's teams are well placed to address external environmental changes, issues affecting the marketing and sales of the city and to respond quickly with activation plans to address issues as they arrive. The following examples highlight BVCB's flexibility and adaptability in being able to respond quickly to industry needs:

- BVCB has currently been called to develop a short term marketing campaign to rebuild confidence and footfall to the City, and counter balance the negative impact of the recent and ongoing civil unrest.
- During the onset of the recession BVCB was able to quickly capitalise on the strength of the Euro against Sterling and drive visitors and overnights to Belfast through retargeted ROI marketing.
- More recently BVCB provided integrated marketing and communications support to 'Belfast on the Move', the Lord Mayor's stakeholder group formed to address transport and access issues in the City.
- In the lead up to Christmas 2012, the Marketing and Communications team provided and implemented integrated real-time plans to address the negative impact of flag protests and to encourage shoppers back into the City. Using "call to action" promotions, the Marketing and Communications team led the development of creative campaigns for radio, TV and social media. The response was achieved within 48 hours.

Evaluation of the Christmas 2012 activity is currently being undertaken, but included below are some excerpts from industry feedback to the Leisure Tourism team on the campaign.

Titanic Belfast, CEO, Tim Husbands: "Titanic Belfast celebrated its first ever Christmas in 2012 and so it was important that our festive messages reached customers via the best communication methods available to us. This was achieved through our partnership with BVCB. Its Christmas campaign promoting Belfast and activities in the City played a vital role in the overall success of seasonal visitor numbers to Titanic Belfast".

Victoria Square: "With regards to footfall and sales, things were very slow for the first 2 weeks of December resulting from the protests citywide. We did, however, see a surge in the last 2 weeks of the month which helped many retailers meet their targets. It is hard to say for certain if the campaign was a major contributing factor, however, I did receive lots of positive feedback regarding both the 48 sheets and TV ads and do think it helped support us for what was a more challenging December than expected!"

Translink: "We were delighted with the impact and exposure of the Christmas Campaign. Highlighting bus & rail travel as an easy way to travel to the City portrayed a very strong, modern and vibrant image that we felt helped move the campaign forward and add value for the other partners. Exploiting additional platforms through

Translink (banners, leaflet distribution, web/social media) was also very effective in extending the reach of the campaign. We look forward to working with BVCB again on the 2013 campaign”.

Corporate Sponsorship

At the time of writing, BVCB had achieved 97% of its corporate sponsorship target of £100k for 2012- 2013. The sponsors are Diageo NI and Value Cabs. Consultation feedback from both sponsors regarding BVCB was extremely positive, particularly regarding BVCB’s performance over the last year. However, sponsorship investment is not undertaken lightly and both organisations stated that they have been more demanding on BVCB in terms of reporting on value for money and tangible benefits. Value Cabs and Diageo NI both reported that BVCB is delivering value in terms of sponsorship benefits and its commitments, with proactive engagement from the team and valuable professional marketing skills.

Appendix I summarises Leisure Tourism performance against the 2012-2013 operational plan. The Leisure Tourism team has performed well against all its KPIs, and will meet or exceed the majority of its targets.

Business Tourism

Following a review with NITB in 2011, it was agreed that only BVCB-led conference sales contribute towards the convention bureau targets and performance. Therefore, conferences for which BVCB performed a secondary, servicing role would no longer be included in the team’s performance. The original business tourism targets outlined in the three year plan have been realigned to take account of this new approach are outlined below.

To support this change in focus and to achieve the conference growth levels required, BVCB instigated an ambitious programme of change and investment during 2011/12 which is now having a positive impact.

The table below illustrates business tourism’s recent sales performance. BVCB conference wins have generated year on year sales growth of +12% in 2011/2012, and are on target to achieve +70% growth in 2012/2013. These growth figures have been achieved during a period of significant change and re-organisation within business tourism.

Conference Sales Performance 2010-2013				
New bookings secured	2010/2011 actual	2011/2012 actual	2012/2013 (YTD - 9mths)	2012/2013 (Target)
Economic impact	£14.4m	£16.05m	£18.9m	£27.3m
Delegates	11,639	12,860	14,750	21,000
Bed nights	33,480	35,380	38,785	42,000

Internal Re-organisation

Significant internal change has taken place within Business Tourism since the development of the three year plan, demonstrating the commitment of BVCB to delivering on the recommendations and targets therein.

A new Director of Business Tourism joined the organisation in late 2011 and, in 2012, the Business Tourism team was restructured and now includes four conference sales managers, an ambassador/research executive and a conference sales co-ordinator responsible for accommodation bookings. A highly sales focused structure and system has been put in place, concentrated on pipeline development, prospecting and research to develop bid opportunities, and a sales conversion plan focused on the top priority opportunities.

Proposals and Bids for Association Conferences

By the end of Qtr 3 of 2012/13, BVCB had submitted 72 bids worth £42.3m, against an annual target of 150 bids worth £54.6m equating to 77% of the annual value target. The current sales conversion rate on bids submitted during this year is 60%. Business tourism is currently on track towards achieving its challenging 2012-2013 targets on the value of proposals submitted and is currently well ahead on its target for conversion of bids.

Some of the key opportunities that could potentially be secured in the forthcoming quarters include:

- British Contact Lens Association – 1000 delegates x 4 days (£1.9m)
- British Orthopaedic Association – 1500 delegates x 4 days (£2.4m)
- Federation of Small Businesses Conference – 800 delegates x 3 days (£780k)
- British Academy of Management – 650 delegates x 4 days (£900k)

Conference Accommodation Booking Fees

This is a challenging KPI as the general trends show visitors are increasingly adept at sourcing the best accommodation rates available by booking directly from the accommodation provider, through an OTA (online travel operator) or hotel booking engine which compares the best rates. Within the accommodation sector, all providers now reserve the best room rate for their own website, specifically to avoid having to pay booking fees, or via a third party site with a competitive rate to drive volume bookings.

Business Tourism has a target to generate £30,000 in income from conference led accommodation booking fees in 2012/13. Actual booking fee income in the first 9 months of 2012-2013 stands at just over £14,000. In light of a number of events booking 'around the block' either direct with hotels or via a third party comparison site with a lower rate, it is projected that income from conference accommodation bookings will finalise at £19,000 for 2012/13, 63% of the original target.

Launch of BVCB Conference Taskforce

As recommended in its 3 year plan, BVCB has recently initiated a conference taskforce. The taskforce comprises key industry players who work with BVCB to identify new and review existing conference enquiries and, where possible, support BVCB in converting these into confirmed business.

Although it is still very early days in the development of the taskforce, BVCB has shown that it can offer a flexible and practical quick response approach to industry, using the flying squad approach recommended in its 2011-2014 Business Plans.

For example, during the current year some industry based members requested support for targeting smaller conference events. With discretionary business tourism hit particularly hard by the recession, BVCB agreed to work closely with Northern Ireland Hotel's Federation and NITB to address the reduced demand from this sector. BVCB has responded by undertaking a tactical sales campaign during quarter 2 focused on identifying smaller, short term conference opportunities for members and by developing a plan to target the corporate conference market during 2012/13. 312 clients were contacted, generating 28 leads with a potential value of £9.2 million.

New Marketing Tools

A new conference website has been launched to support marketing activity, and a new conference iPhone app has recently been developed for delegates attending conferences in Belfast as a servicing and sales tool. In addition, BVCB has migrated to a new accommodation booking service platform during 2012, offering an enhanced service to users and conference organisers. BVCB has also rolled out a number of email marketing campaigns to prospective clients to increase awareness of Belfast as a conference destination.

Presentations to Buyers – Tradeshows and Sales Calls

Business Tourism had a target to undertake 110 sales calls with clients considering Belfast as a potential conference destination and has already exceeded this target having completed 114 sales calls by the end of quarter 3.

The team have been involved in promoting Belfast as a leading conference destination at numerous tradeshows and events during 2012/2013, including:

- GB: Association Congress Liverpool, C&IT forum, Tourism Ireland business tourism networking event, BVCB destination showcase, London and International Confex
- Europe: IMEX Frankfurt, EIBTM, Tourism Ireland business tourism meet the buyer event (Brussels), Tourism Ireland sales blitz (Brussels).
- USA: IMEX America and Tourism Ireland association networking event (Washington).

Conference and Corporate Ambassador Programme

Conference Ambassadors play a crucial role in helping BVCB to identify potential new conference business and in supporting the conversion of opportunities into confirmed business. BVCB has a target to recruit 60 new Ambassadors with new conference leads onto the Conference Ambassador Programme in 2012/13. At the end of Q3, 38 new Ambassadors have been recruited (63% of target) from a variety of sectors including aerospace, renewable energy and social care.

BVCB has been working on the development of an extension to its current Conference Ambassador Programme, the launch of a 'Corporate' Ambassador Programme, in conjunction with NITB and Invest NI. BVCB has met with senior executives within Invest NI about the new programme and support has been very positive. Although still at an early phase, the premise behind this initiative is to engage with Northern Ireland's key private sector businesses at executive level to attract out-of-state corporate business to the City, and target key industry sectors in which Northern Ireland has particular global expertise and for which Belfast would be an attractive international conference destination.

Contracted GB Sales Representative

In the previous business plan, BVCB identified the need for a GB based sales representative who would help to identify additional conference leads for Belfast within the key markets. However, following subsequent discussions with Tourism Ireland, the GB office agreed to extend the existing lead generation contract for Sarah Fleming Associates (SFA) negating the need for a BVCB appointed representative.

Following the contract's inception in 2010, 74 leads have been generated by SFA which are currently being progressed by BVCB, worth £56.8m in economic impact. The leads are medium to long term but one conference has been secured to date - the World Conference on Mental Health and Blindness.

The significant increase in Business Tourism's sales performance in the current year is evidence that the change in strategic direction implemented on the recommendation of the 2011-2014 Business Plan is now generating very positive results. The level of organisational change required within the Business Tourism team was a key focus for 2011-2012, but the team has overcome these challenges and is both committed and motivated to sustain the momentum that has been developed in the current year. Appendix I details Business Tourism performance against its KPIs.

Membership

BVCB has a strong private sector membership base and good representation from the hospitality sector in the City; with 468 members, the organisation outperforms a number of its counterparts in other regions of UK and Ireland². The annual membership fee income generated by BVCB is greater than that achieved in Bath, Cardiff and Manchester. In the year to date, BVCB has invoiced £125,000 in

membership fees and has retained 94% of its membership base, and it is anticipated that £165,000 in membership fees will be achieved in the current financial year (94% of target).

There has been some movement in membership over the last three years. On average membership has seen circa 55 non-renewing members in each year over this period, but the organisation has, on average, gained 50 new members. In the current financial climate, this movement in membership profile is not unexpected and, in any given year, around 50% of non-renewals are due to ceased trading or cancellations due to outstanding payments.

Crucially, BVCB has retained its higher fee category membership, which accounts for the majority of income and is the category also most likely to invest further in additional joint marketing opportunities. BVCB's own research² indicates that, for every £1 in membership fees that it generates, a further £2.74 is invested by members through participation in further BVCB led marketing opportunities and platforms. ² *Research undertaken by Dr John Heeley in July 2012.*

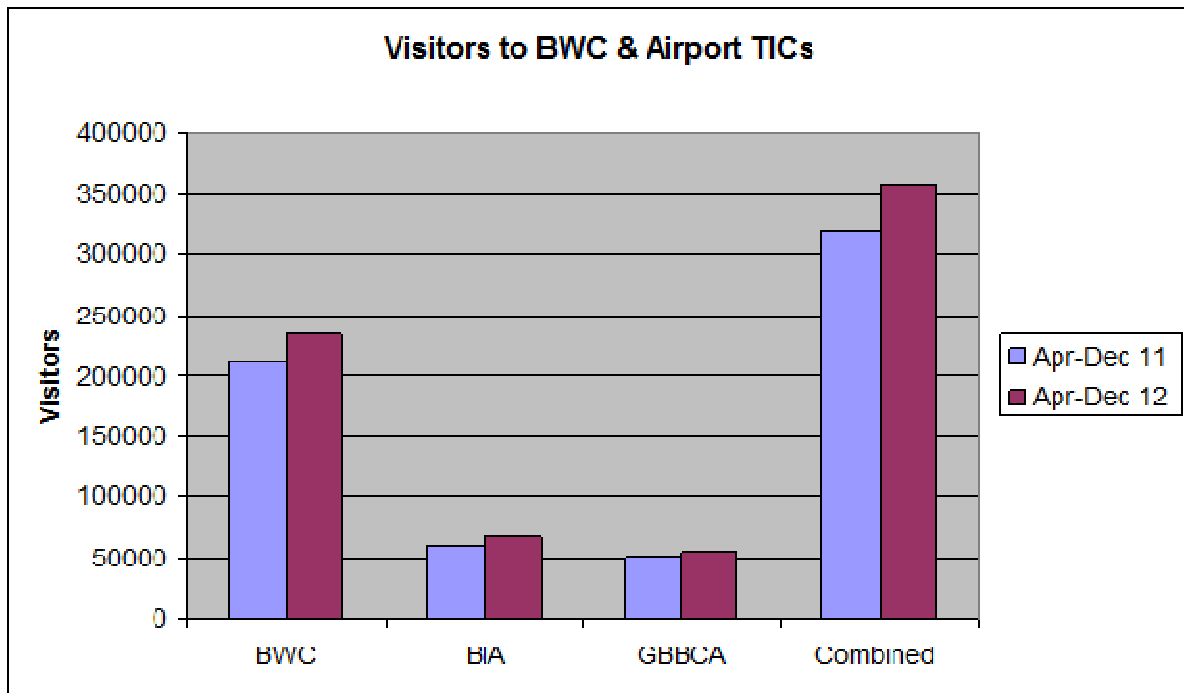
BVCB has already embarked on a new membership engagement strategy and appointed a new membership manager to implement the plan. The plan will ensure that the organisation is taking proactive steps to retain membership levels, increase BVCB's engagement with members and encourage participation, and to clearly demonstrate the membership value and strategic industry benefits. The strategy will involve agreeing on the appropriate service levels for different "bands" of membership and on a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) focus to retain membership levels. The membership engagement strategy is discussed further in section 3.

Visitor Servicing

Separate Business Plans are developed for the Belfast Welcome Centre and each of the Airport TICs.

The overall number of visitors to the 3 TICs operated by BVCB has been strong in 2012-2013, showing continued growth (357,324 in the first 9 months of the current year against 319,972 in the same period last year, a 12% growth).

The Belfast Welcome Centre (BWC) enjoyed a particularly strong opening to the current year, boosted by increased tourist numbers for the opening of Titanic Belfast, with the gateway Belfast International Airport also outperforming on 2011-2012 comparable time periods.



In addition to the day to day running of the 3 tourist information centres, BVCB also undertook a number of specific additional projects over the course of 2012/13 – all of which reflect and enhance the added value and outreach activities managed from the BWC:

- Enhanced outreach and provision of information at Ferry ports and main train terminal;
- Enhanced use of new technology as a visitor servicing tool, through upgrade of ticketing software;
- BVCB development and launch of a further downloadable audio visual walking Belfast iTour in September 2010. Since then, BVCB has continued to develop and deliver the Belfast iTours, in conjunction with the Belfast Area Partnerships and Failte Feirste Thiar;
- Enhancement of links to coordinate and integrate with the tourism information centres at Queen’s University Belfast, Culturlann in West Belfast, and the East Belfast Partnership;
- Mobile/Pop Up Tourist Information Points;
- Front line staff “Learning Journeys” Greater Belfast Concierge programme;
- Events Ticketing and Enquiry Handling for a number of major Northern Ireland events;
- BCC City Tour Products – providing ticketing and enquiry handling;
- BWC secured the contract to deliver the visitor servicing and handling accommodation booking for the 2013 World Police and Fire Games;

- Launched a pilot Belfast Visitor Pass in April 2011, as a joint project between BCC, NITB and Translink. To date over 4,000 passes have been sold.

Belfast Welcome Centre

BWC typically handles between 350,000 - 400,000 enquiries per annum, and generates over £1 million gross income per annum from commercial and retail activities. It is a major asset and integral part of the tourism offering in Belfast, and also has a central gateway role to play as the main information centre in the capital City.

After a long period of year on year growth, BWC saw throughput fall from 2007/08 until 2010/11, before returning to growth last year and with a further 12% growth projected for the current year. The decline was mainly due to the economic downturn which in turn affected visitor numbers to the City, and the Streets Ahead works outside the Centre.

However, handling of the Titanic Belfast tickets, the Olympic and Paralympic flame wristbands, the Christmas Lights Switch On, the Titanic Centenary celebrations/events and Tier 1 events that went on throughout 2012 helped to push up the impressive growth recorded for 2012/13 – with a projected 12% increase in throughput and 14% increase in enquiries.

BWC's performance against its KPIs is summarised below, indicating a strong projected uplift in throughput and enquiries for the current year.

Key Performance Indicators 2009/10 to 2012/13				
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13proj
Throughput (electronic eye)	290,872	236,325	262,318	285,926
Total Enquiries	383,112	319,314	328,900	370,147
Total gross Income	£1,157,257	£1,065,33	£1,061,823	£1,031,800

Gross income from retail sales have been fluctuating over recent years. After a record year in 2007/8 the picture has been more mixed in the last 5 years, exacerbated by the construction works related to the Streets Ahead project, and more recently by competing outlets in the City.

Gross Profit/Net Income from retail sales		
Year	ACTUAL (£)	%
2001/02	61,556	+52%
2002/03	93,511	+108%
2006/07	192,983	+4%
2007/08	244,174	+5%
2008/09	156,658	-35%
2009/10	165,679	+6%
2010/11	130,405	-21%
2011/12	122,729	-6%
2012/13	137,760	+12%

BVCB's customer service target is to achieve an 80%-85% satisfaction rating in the annual mystery shop exercise. The Centre has been on target but, in 2012, a low score was achieved against the email contact during winter and the telephone contact during summer (which occurred during a key event, when the Centre was extremely busy). As a result, the overall average score for the Centre dropped from 85% in 2011 to 76% in 2012.

BWC Mystery Shopper Ratings						
	Summer		Winter		Average	
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012
Email	92%	87%	83%	48%	87%	68%
Telephone	92%	55%	92%	86%	92%	71%
Site visit	88%	75%	65%	98%	76%	87%
Overall	91%	72%	80%	77%	85%	76%

Airport TICs

The strategic importance of the gateway airport TICs is well documented. The 2012 Strategic Review of BVCB's Visitor Servicing concluded that the airport TICs "create a positive showcasing of the Northern Ireland/Belfast tourist offering and a true welcoming first impression of Northern Ireland". The Review also notes that both airport TICs provide "commendable leverage on core funding" and the economic contribution to Northern Ireland as a whole was estimated at an additional £2.94 million into the local economy in 2012-2013.

However, BVCB is facing significant change in the funding model for its airport TICs. NITB has advised that its funding for Visitor Servicing will be reduced in each of the 2 following years. Furthermore, both airports are considering redeveloping their arrivals areas, which will have implications for the location and format of the TICs.

Belfast International Airport

Over the course of the current year (2012-2013) it is estimated that the Belfast International Airport (BIA) TIC will have handled just over 94,000 enquiries. In line with recession, the TIC saw enquiry levels drop slightly over 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. However, encouragingly, enquiry levels have picked up again and have now exceeded previous record levels. Two thirds of enquiries are counter enquiries made directly in the TIC, whilst the balancing third are day time browsers, telephone and email enquiries.

BIA TIC: Total enquiries and income generated 2005/6 - 2012/13									
Year	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 (proj)	% Diff
Counter Enquiries	49,174	57,965	64,628	62,680	61,940	52,221	59,062	64,563	+31%
Total Enquiries	54,947	76,814	90,463	91,353	88,241	80,463	86,605	94,405	+72%
Total gross commercial Income*	£96,020	£133,978	£146,349	£176,988	£170,606	£157,378	£194,315	£222,650	+132%

The gross private sector income generated from booking commissions, retail sales, sponsorship and advertising has increased by 132% over the last seven years, from £96,020 in 2005-2006 to an impressive projected £222,650 by 2012-2013. The TIC operates within a tight budget, and this income provides a valuable contribution towards running costs and staffing, which will become all the more important as NITB reduces its funding for Visitor Servicing.

The BIA TIC's target is to achieve a customer satisfaction score of 80%-85%. As shown below, since August 2011, the overall average (at 78%) is slightly below target. The main area of underperformance has been in the handling of telephone enquiries and, more concerning, performance in this area has been deteriorating. The main reason for the underperformance in this area has been lack of staff and time to deal with telephone enquiries when the TIC counter is busy.

Without additional staff, there are limited options to address this issue. However, staff training on handling telephone enquiries will be reinforced, and further training put in place to maintain a consistently high rating for the site visits.

Mystery Shop Exercise at BIA					
	Aug '11	Nov '11	Feb '12	Aug '12	Overall Average %
Site Visit	95%	63%	59%	95%	78%
Phone Call	74%	n/a	73%	63%	70%
E Mail	83%	n/a	85%	91%	86%
Average	84%		72%	83%	78%

George Best Belfast City Airport

Since it first opened the George Best Belfast City Airport (GBBCA) TIC has exceeded its enquiry level targets. However, the last 2 years have been challenging for the TIC, with the withdrawal of Ryanair (October 2010), BMI and BMI Baby from GBBCA, resulting in a drop in passenger numbers and income. Since then, GBBCA has gained British Airways and Aer Lingus so enquiry levels have increased over the last six months of the current year.

The TIC's counter enquiries are now well above target and are projected to finalise at 5% above target with total enquiries up 6% by the end of the year.

Just under 60% of the enquiries are counter enquiries made directly in the TIC. Counter enquiries have increased by a sixth over the last 4 years to reach 43,294 (projected) in 2012-2013.

GBBCA TIC: Total enquiries and income generated 2005/06 - 2012/13						
Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 (proj)	% Diff
Counter Enquiries	37,557	36,726	34,424	40,366	43,294	+15%
Total Enquiries	70,934	70,447	67,577	69,486	74,552	+5%
Total gross Income	£36,101	£59,166	£72,623	£57,494	£66,200	+83%

The gross private sector income generated from accommodation booking commissions, retail sales, sponsorship and advertising has increased by 83% over the last four years, from £36,101 in 2008-2009 to a projected £66,200 by 2012-2013. Income increased significantly in 2010-2011, due to the fluctuation in poster site sales, then dipped last year and then returned to growth in 2012-2013 as a result of the 2012 celebrations and the more recent addition of British Airways and Aer Lingus flights, which from introduction in November, increased passenger levels by 10% in November and almost 7% in December.

The GBBCA TIC's target is to achieve a customer satisfaction score of 80%-85%. As shown below, since August 2011 the overall average (at 81%) is on target, and satisfaction levels have been improving to an impressive 89% in August 2012.

GBBCA Mystery Shop					
	Aug '11	Nov '11	Feb '12	Aug '12	Overall Average %
Site Visit	73%	76%	81%	97%	82%
Phone Call	69%	n/a	90%	78%	79%
E Mail	91%	n/a	68%	92%	84%
Average	78%		80%	89%	81%

Both airport TICs face similar issues going forward; the need and importance of the airport TICs is accepted, but both are challenged by funding and commercial pressures; whereas demand for services is expected to grow in 2013, funding will be reduced. In parallel, both airports are considering redeveloping their arrivals areas.

TIC performance is analysed in greater detail in separate business plans, while Appendix I summarises performance of all 3 TICs against KPIs.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Analysis of BVCB performance against 2012-2013 KPIs and progress against the strategic objectives set out in the 2011-2014 strategy, shows that BVCB has made excellent progress.

The internal restructuring initiated in 2011-2012 and accelerated in 2012-2013, plus the realignment of strategy towards a more commercial and sales focus, has resulted in BVCB being on track to meet or exceed the majority of its 2012-2013 KPIs and to

deliver: 277,000 bednights and daytrips to the City; circa £60 million spend in the local economy; generating a return on investment of 16:1 and a leverage for BCC of approx 1:1.

The half-year results from the Belfast Tourism Monitor report a 14% increase in visitors for the first six months of 2012 compared to the same period in 2011. This double digit increase far exceeds the annual growth targets of 3.9% p.a. set out in the 2011-2014 plans, which should also see the City and BVCB meet the overall growth targets set by 2014.

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3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2013-2014

3.1 The final year of BVCB's 3-year Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan will see some significant changes being implemented. The major projects are summarised below; these are in addition to the ongoing work and initiatives outlined in Section 2.

3.2 RELOCATION OF WELCOME CENTRE AND BVCB TO NEW PREMISES

The Belfast Welcome Centre (to become the Visit Belfast Welcome Centre) will open in new ground floor city centre premises in mid-late September 2013. The relocation has been planned to take place immediately after the World Police and Fire Games in August 2013, thereby avoiding any potentially negative impact on the servicing of the Games (in the possible event of a delay in the new premises becoming available).

The new state-of-the-art ground floor premises, located in the heart of the city centre at 8-9 Donegall Square North, will provide greater on-street visibility and access for tourists, with the potential to increase footfall at the Welcome Centre by 20%³.

A visioning paper prepared by Dr John Heeley for BVCB outlined the essential characteristics of the new Welcome Centre, which will showcase the "Belfast story". The new Welcome Centre will have a modern look and feel based on a design which encourages visitors to use the latest interactive touch screen technology. The larger premises will also enable staff to circulate throughout the floor space to "meet and greet" and assist visitors with their enquiries, and will provide more opportunities for advertising income. The Belfast Welcome Centre 2013-2014 business plan details the operational activity for the Centre in its current location from April 2013 to September 2013 and in its new location from September 2013 to March 2014.

3.3 WORLD POLICE & FIRE GAMES

The WPFPG in August 2013 is a significant event for Belfast's 2013 calendar. It is expected to attract some 25,000 visitors, including 10,000 competitors from around the world, and is projected to generate £16.3 million for the local economy. The Games will take place between 1st and 10th August 2013 in 40 venues across Northern Ireland, and BVCB has been contracted to handle the accommodation bookings for the Games. With a booking system now in place, BWC has already secured over 14,200 beds across 10 nights in the greater Belfast area, with currently just over 2,500 rooms booked, over 46,000 bednights and in the region of £2 million in sales. It is expected that this will increase significantly with BVCB aiming to get 18,500-19,000 bedspaces on its system.

In addition to managing accommodation bookings, the TICs managed by BVCB and particularly the Belfast Welcome Centre will play an important visitor servicing role throughout the Games. The additional footfall will place considerable pressure on the visitor servicing resources of BVCB. Specific plans to recruit temporary staff are being developed to facilitate the creation of pop-up TIC's where needed, and to coordinate volunteers and additional staff for existing TIC's. These plans are outlined in the BWC business plan for 2013-2014.

³ Business Case by TFCI

3.4 PHASE 2 VISITOR PASS

A pilot Belfast Visitor Pass was launched in April 2011, as a joint project between BCC, NITB and Translink. It features free public transport and discounts and offers 75 products throughout the city: attractions, tours, venues, restaurants and shops. To date over 4,490 passes have been sold (1, 2 and 3 day passes), representing sales of £40k.

BWC now hopes to roll out Phase 2 of the Visitor Pass, to take this to a fully integrated solution akin to the European models – whereby visitors paying a higher per day fee and get free admission to attractions and free public transport. The rationale for, and benefits of, Phase 2 of the Visitor Pass have already been reviewed and assessed in previous independent reports. It has been acknowledged that the development and extension of the Visitor Pass would result in a key tool for helping to spread the benefits of tourism throughout the City, strengthening value for money perceptions amongst visitors, and developing into a gateway tool to promote attractions and products across Northern Ireland. Commercially, the Visitor Pass is also an income generator for BVCB, providing a contribution to core expenditure. A Business Case for the development of Phase 2 of the Visitor Pass was completed in December 2011, detailing the set up costs required for the development of the Phase 2 Pass. BVCB will require one-off funding for this exceptional project, over and above the ongoing core operating costs of the Welcome Centre. These costs are detailed in the BWC Business Plan.

3.5 CORPORATE NAME CHANGE FOR BVCB

The corporate name change for BVCB has been approved by the Board and the organisation will be known as 'Visit Belfast' from the beginning of the 2013-2014 financial year. This new simplified name reflects the clarity of purpose within the organisation and is closely linked to its revised core purpose statement:

"To create and service visitors for Belfast in order to generate economic benefit for the City region". A Name Change Implementation Plan to roll out the new Visit Belfast name is outlined in Appendix II.

3.6 MEMBERSHIP RE-LAUNCH AND ENGAGEMENT

BVCB has had considerable success in attracting and maintaining a strong membership base, which brings in valuable income and levers buy-in through member participation in all its activities. Member engagement is a core part of the BVCB ethos but, in the current economic climate, past success can no longer be taken for granted.

A review of the current scheme has been undertaken to enhance and improve the service offered to BVCB members. During 2012/2013 the key priorities are to:

- Refresh and re-launch the new BVCB membership scheme for both existing and new members;

- Champion the needs of BVCB members amongst key stakeholders as the voice of the tourism and hospitality industry in Belfast;
- Grow BVCB membership to maximise market share in all key tourism sectors;
- Strengthen the existing membership base through new strategic account management practices, improved engagement, communications, measurement and reporting;
- Increase membership satisfaction.

BVCB has developed a detailed member engagement plan to ensure that members are more aware of the tangible benefits and value that the organisation can deliver.

3.7 CORPORATE AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME

BVCB will build upon the success of its Conference Ambassador Programme by launching a Corporate Ambassador Programme, working closely with key business organisations and agencies in Belfast. This will be supported by sales and marketing activity to attract corporate conferences and events to Belfast and specifically within the key economic sectors where Northern Ireland has key strengths.

3.8 BELFAST WATERFRONT EXTENSION LAUNCH

BVCB and Belfast Waterfront have identified the need to work closely together to maximise opportunities for the City in advance of the completion of the venue's extension. All top performing conference destinations have a common success factor – the primary conference centre and destination work together as 'one team' and take a collaborative sales approach to securing conference business. BVCB and Belfast Waterfront will develop a joint marketing plan in quarter 1 of 2013, for implementation in the run-up to the opening of the extension in 2016, to attract large city-wide conferences to Belfast. A collaborative marketing and sales plan will help underpin the significant capital investment that has been made in the new extension and maximise the return on investment.

3.9 DIGITAL MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

BVCB will continue to build on the progress already achieved in developing online and digital channel support for BVCB's marketing and communications activity. BVCB will focus on the communications power of mobile, tablets and apps and optimise website and digital campaigns to drive visitor numbers.

BVCB will take its social media to the next level through cost-effective engagement with online communities for enhanced engagement and impact. Through building Belfast's position on these channels it will proactively recruit and activate supporters online, integrating with the wider sales, marketing and visitor servicing activity.

BVCB will work with Belfast City Council and the industry to deliver the objectives and maximise the benefits of the Super-Connected Belfast project.

3.10 SEGMENTATION RESEARCH: NITB'S "PRIORITIES FOR GROWTH" AND TOURISM IRELAND'S "GB PATH TO GROWTH"

BVCB will adopt the new segmentation research from NITB and Tourism Ireland (TI) in all its leisure marketing communications, prioritising and utilising those segments that offer the best fit and potential for Belfast. This will involve shifting the focus from marketing products, to developing compelling experience propositions and distinctive visitor experiences that match the needs, interests and motivations of those segments.

The Leisure Tourism team will continue to work closely with NITB and Tourism Ireland in integrating Belfast City Marketing Plans and also influencing activity by providing Belfast specific messages, images and city brand themes.

Campaign plans will be developed in close cooperation and consultation with NITB, BVCB's commercial partnerships and Tourism Ireland to ensure full integration, impact and avoid duplication or overlap. In this way, the combined strength of these campaigns will deliver maximum results for Belfast with BVCB's activity more tactically focused towards activation and driving audiences to book.

3.11 CONCLUSIONS

The priority activities outlined above include a number of strategically important, but resource intensive projects which will require significant dedicated management time. This will be an exciting but challenging year for BVCB. Senior Management roles and responsibilities for delivery of these projects will continue to be refined during the current year; equally important will be the management of staff resources to ensure that key pressure points are identified and planned for. A strong management focus on KPI monitoring will also be critical in ensuring that there continues to be a balance between delivery on operational targets and strategic projects.

4. BVCB OPERATIONAL PLANS 2013-2014

4.1 This section of the Business Plan presents the detailed operational plans for each of the key areas of BVCB activity.

4.2 LEISURE TOURISM

Appendix III contains the detailed action plans and budgets for Leisure Tourism.

Market Segments

Two important research reports have been released over recent months, identifying and profiling key market segments in GB and ROI:

- **'GB Path to Growth'** – a report commissioned by the Tourism Recovery Taskforce to address the decline in the number of visitors to the island of Ireland from GB in recent years.
- **NITB's 'Priorities for Growth'** – which identifies priority segments in the NI & ROI markets.

The focus of the research has been about understanding the needs and motivations of visitors in NI, ROI and GB and how they decide between one short break destination and another. The research highlights that leading destinations focus their efforts on a well defined group of visitors within key markets i.e. key segments, resulting in a segmentation driven research approach. This has therefore provided the industry with valuable insights and information which BVCB has reviewed in detail to identify the best prospect and priority segments for Belfast.

The reports highlight that target segments want to encounter something different, not necessarily a destination or even a product, but an 'experience'. There is a clear need therefore to develop and communicate relevant and motivating experiences to each of the segments that have been prioritised. This experiential approach is firmly embedded in other world-class destinations.

GB

Seven segments are profiled in the 'GB Path to Growth' report and three have been prioritised by Tourism Ireland. Prioritisation has been based on a range of key influencing factors including: immediate growth opportunities; 'warmth' to NI; segment size and growth potential; the ability for NI to meet their individual motivations by offering the experiences they want. Three key segments have been prioritised for the GB market as follows – Social Energisers, Culturally Curious and Great Escapers.

NI & ROI

NITB's 'Priorities for Growth' Report identified eight best prospect segments in the NI and ROI markets and four have been prioritised.

As with the GB market, prioritising the segments was based on the following factors: opportunity for growth in each segment; the match between the interests of each

segment and the product capability in NI; barriers that impede active consideration of NI as a short break destination; value of the opportunity V the difficulty of exploiting this opportunity.

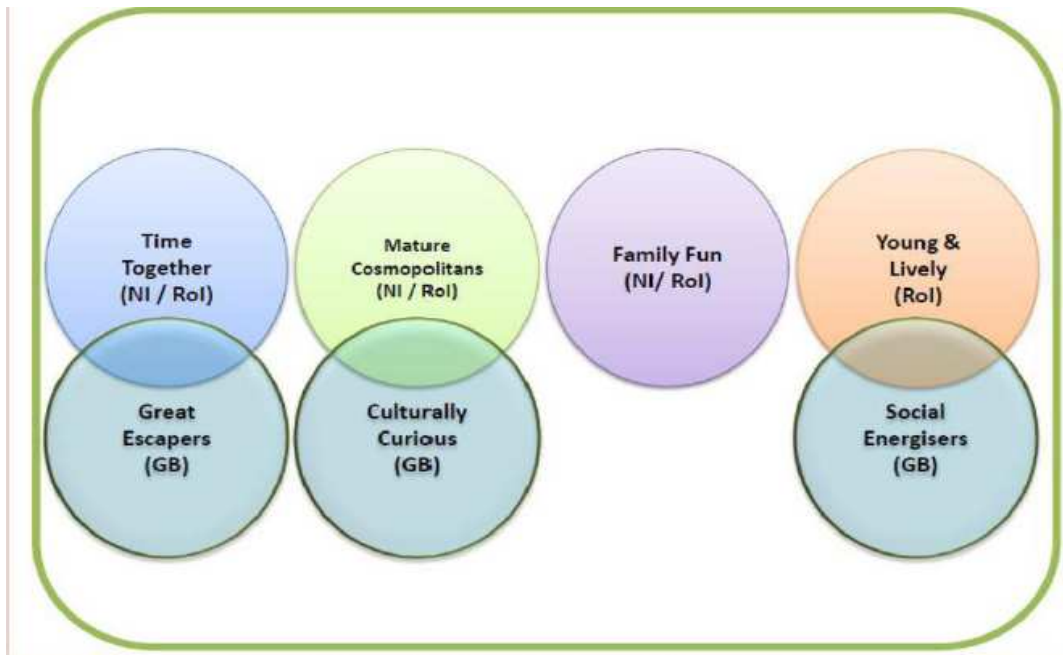
The following key segments have been prioritised: Mature Cosmopolitans, Time Together, Young and Lively (and Family Fun – medium long term priority).

Illustrated below are the priority segments for GB and NI/ ROI markets.

Market: GB	
Social Energisers	Young couples, adult groups looking for fun and excitement (city vibe)
Culturally Curious	Older couples with time, want to do a place (culture, living history)
Great Escapers	Younger couples, with or without young families (connecting with nature)
Market: NI & ROI	
Immediate Priorities (NITB)	
Mature Cosmopolitans:	older couples (50+) looking to relax and spend time together
Time Together	couples with children at home taking a romantic break together
Young & Lively	groups of young adults looking for fun together
Medium/Long term Priority	
Family Fun	family units spending quality time together

There are similarities and overlap in the key characteristics of the prioritised segments across the main geographic markets, which are important in developing the experiential propositions for these core segments. See Diagram on next page.

Diagram: All Segments



From Belfast's perspective, it is imperative that BVCB focuses on identified best prospects and adopts a segmentation approach to city break marketing. From analysis and consideration of best fit, market size and potential, BVCB has identified the following priority segments for Belfast in the NI, ROI and GB markets and will adopt a marketing and communications strategy that focuses on compelling experiences that match the needs, interests and motivations of the segments:

GB: Social Energisers (primary segment) and Culturally Curious (secondary segment)

NI & ROI: Young and Lively (primary segment) and Mature Cosmopolitans (secondary segment)

The table overleaf presents the priority segments in the key geographic markets, linking the themes and messages that can connect with the segments and the products that will inform the experience pillars to ultimately grow market share.

City Breaks

Market	Segments	Products	Themes / Messages	Channels
GB: Scotland, N of England, London	Social Energisers (18-34yrs, no kids, couples, adult groups, urban adventurers)	Events, Festivals, Music, Nightlife, Retail, Heritage and Key Attractions	Vibe of the City; Only in Belfast; City of Festivals & Events; the Belfast Story / Experiences	Social media, online, VoD, cinema, radio
		Titanic, Cultural Quarters, Great Belfast Food	New experiences, vibrant location, action-packed days & fun-filled nights, excitement, fun, gateway role (city + experiences)	
ROI: Dublin, Dublin Corridor	Young & Lively (18-34yrs, ABC1, couples, adult groups, interested in urban breaks)	Events, Festivals, Music, Nightlife, Retail, Heritage and Key Attractions (MAC, Lyric etc), Great Belfast Food, Cultural Quarters	Culture & Creative Vibe i.e. 'Signature Experience'; Only in Belfast; City of Festivals & Events; Belfast Experience	Above the line (digital TV, radio, press), digital & social platforms
		Titanic & Maritime – core products of the 'Living Legends' experience pillar	New experiences, vibrant location, excitement, fun	
			Welcome, compact, modern, new destination, VFM	
			Welcome, compact, modern, new destination, VFM	

Day Trips

Market	Segments	Products	Themes / Messages	Channels
NI	18-45yrs, couples and small groups, DINKYs, family, Empty nesters, culture seekers	Retail, Titanic Belfast, Titanic experiences, 2013 events, Cultural Quarters (an Culturlann, Shankill), Literature (CS Lewis), heritage & other attractions (Lyric, The MAC)	Only in Belfast; City of Festivals & Events; Maritime Heritage; the Belfast Story / Experiences Welcome, VFM, variety	TV, press, radio, outdoor, online, digital, exhibitions
ROI: Dublin, Dublin Corridor	Young & Lively (18-34yrs, ABC1, couples, adult groups, interested in urban breaks)	Events, Festivals, Music, Retail, Heritage and Key Attractions (MAC, Lyric etc), Cultural Quarters Great Belfast Food	Culture & Creative Vibe i.e. 'Signature Experience'; Only in Belfast; City of Festivals & Events; Belfast Experience New experiences, vibrant location, excitement, fun Welcome, compact, modern, new destination, VFM	Social media, online, VoD, cinema, radio
ROI: Dublin, Dublin Corridor	Young & Lively (18-34yrs, ABC1, couples, adult groups, interested in urban breaks)	Events, Festivals, Music, Nightlife, Retail, Heritage and Key Attractions (MAC, Lyric etc), Great Belfast Food, Cultural Quarters Titanic & Maritime – core products of the 'Living Legends' experience pillar	Culture & Creative Vibe i.e. 'Signature Experience'; Only in Belfast; City of Festivals & Events; Belfast Experience New experiences, vibrant location, excitement, fun Welcome, compact, modern, new destination, VFM	Above the line (digital TV, radio, press), digital & social platforms

BVCB Business Plan 2013-2014

Cruise Market

Market	Segments	Products	Themes / Messages	Channels
North America & Germany	Mature professionals & early retirees <i>(aligns with 'Culturally Curious' segment)</i> Cruise Operators	Titanic Belfast, Titanic experiences, Cultural Quarters (an Culturlann, Gaeltacht Quarter, Shankill, Ulster-Scots), Literature (CS Lewis), retail	Only in Belfast; City of Festivals & Events; Maritime Heritage; the Belfast Story / Experiences; Rich & Diverse Culture Welcome, compact, modern, new destination, VFM	Cruise Operators, digital, sales-calls, exhibitions

Tour Operators/Groups

Market	Segments	Products	Themes / Messages	Channels
Tour Groups All	Mature professionals & early retirees <i>(aligns with 'Mature Cosmopolitans' and 'Culturally Curious' segments)</i> Cruise Operators	Titanic Belfast, Titanic experiences, Cultural Quarters (an Culturlann, Gaeltacht Quarter, Shankill, Ulster-Scots), Literature (CS Lewis), retail	Only in Belfast; City of Festivals & Events; Maritime Heritage; the Belfast Story / Experiences; Rich & Diverse Culture Welcome, compact, modern, new destination, VFM	GTOs, travel agents, digital press
Touring FIT All	All ages, families, DINKYs, couples, empty nesters <i>(aligns with the following segments 'Time Together' 'Great Escapers' 'Mature Cosmopolitans' 'Culturally Curious' 'Family Fun')</i> Cruise Operators	Titanic Belfast, Titanic experiences, Cultural Quarters (an Culturlann, Gaeltacht Quarter, Shankill, Ulster-Scots), Literature (CS Lewis)	Only in Belfast; City of Festivals & Events; Maritime Heritage; the Belfast Story / Experiences; Rich & Diverse Culture Welcome, compact, modern, new destination, VFM	GTOs, travel agents, digital press

The key elements of the leisure marketing operational plan are:

City Break Campaigns

GB:

BVCB will undertake targeted, tactical campaign activity in selected direct access cities in GB, working with Tourism Ireland and commercial partners to deliver integrated campaigns with a strong Belfast focus to the priority city break target segments. The main proposition of these campaigns will be to take a city break to Belfast to engage with the range of unique and compelling experiences, Only in Belfast.

In line with Tourism Ireland's marketing plans, the geographical focus of the multi-platform campaigns will be Scotland, London and the key direct access cities in midland and northern England. In addition to Tourism Ireland, commercial partners will include the following direct access carriers between GB and Belfast: Stena Line, Flybe, Aer Lingus, British Airways and Easyjet.

Key performance indicators for this activity will be to achieve £225,000 income from commercial partners, deliver a minimum return on marketing investment of £1:£15, generate an estimated 70,000 bednights and create additional expenditure of £5.7 million. All campaigns will be evaluated independently by Millward Brown Ulster to measure performance against KPIs set.

NI & ROI Campaigns:

The NI and ROI campaigns will be delivered in partnership with retail and industry operators during the key periods of Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter of 2013-2014. The geographic focus will be on domestic and ROI visitors and with particular emphasis on the greater Dublin area. The aim of these campaigns will be to increase footfall and spend in Belfast, stimulate daytrips and generate overnights for the City. Key performance indicators for this activity will be to achieve £150,000 matched income from industry partners, deliver a minimum return on marketing investment of £1:£8, generate an estimated 65,000 visits and create additional expenditure of £2.4 million. All campaigns will be evaluated independently by Millward Brown Ulster to measure performance against KPIs set.

Total Campaign Expenditure

The combined total expenditure on GB City Break and Island of Ireland campaigns in 2013-2014 is projected to be £656,000. Of this total figure, £375k (57%) will be matched income leveraged from commercial partners, enabling BVCB to deliver campaigns with more robust budgets and therefore achieve greater audience reach, penetration and impact across the key segments.

Specific to the GB market, BVCB projects that with a total campaign spend of £356,000, some £225,000 of income can be leveraged from its campaign partners (please note campaign activity with Easyjet generates a further £100k in-kind contribution).

Specific to the NI and ROI markets, total campaign expenditure is budgeted at £300,000, including matched income of £150,000 from campaign partners.

Key Product Marketing Support

BVCB will also deliver key product marketing support across a number of Belfast city products and events utilising their tourism potential to attract additional leisure visitors, including **Belfast Restaurant Week** (October 2013) and **Belfast Music Week** (November 2013). This marketing support will be in addition to the local city marketing undertaken by Belfast City Council and BVCB will promote these product experiences as part of the overall tourism call to action.

The operational plan in Appendix III includes a detailed section relating specifically to BVCB's proposed marketing support for these key city products and events.

In addition, BVCB will seek to fully support and exploit the potential from The Gathering. The Gathering is a year-long initiative focused on global connections to the island of Ireland, in an attempt to persuade the great Irish diaspora to 'come home' for a visit.

BVCB will be working with its members and Tourism Ireland to utilise the marketing platforms and opportunities presented, and ensure Belfast is profiled and linked into all relevant activity and in particular the longer haul markets. Key events in the Belfast calendar will be highlighted as part of this initiative, and digital and web based communication plans implemented.

Cruise Marketing

Cruise is considered to be the world's fastest growing tourism sector, and competition is acute between destinations and ports to gain market share. Belfast's position in the cruise market has increased significantly over the past 12-18 months, and BVCB will now seek to reinforce and further build on this success.

BVCB has an excellent partnership based relationship with Belfast Harbour, and both organisations will continue to work closely together to build Belfast's profile as a prominent UK cruise destination within the British Isle circuit. Joint sales initiatives mean that Belfast's cruise potential is presented very effectively; BVCB plans, develops and delivers the "destination" sales pitch, whilst Belfast Harbour delivers the technical "port and berthing" sales pitch. Both organisations believe that this joint approach provides Belfast with an important competitive advantage when pitching for new business.

Key activity in the 2013-2014 year will include attendance at the key trade shows under the banner of Cruise Ireland to include Cruise Shipping Miami (March), Seatrade Hamburg (September) and Tourism Ireland showcase West Coast USA (October). In addition, a number of targeted sales missions will be undertaken in the US and Germany, to both service and reinforce the continuation of existing committed cruise line business to Belfast as well as to stimulate and convert new interest in the destination.

These sales activities will be supported by the development of Cruise Belfast's online presence and bespoke, high-end collateral and image-rich sales presentations. Some advertising in trade magazines/websites running Irish Sea/British Isles supplements/features e.g. Cruise Industry News and Sea Trade Magazine will be placed as appropriate. BVCB will also deliver targeted fam trips with Belfast Harbour in support of Cruise Belfast.

BVCB's strategy is focused on exploiting the position of Dublin as the Marquee Port for the island of Ireland, with the aspiration of positioning Belfast as the second most visited.

The projected cost of the cruise ship activity is £29,500, which includes attendance at trade shows, fam visits, new marketing collateral and membership of Cruise Ireland.

The KPI target for 2013-2014 is to attract 60 cruise ships in 2014, generating £6 million for the local economy.

Trade Shows, Exhibitions & Workshops

With the continued importance of the leisure market to Belfast for overnight stays, Tour Operator business is playing an important role in driving room sales and spend across the City.

BVCB remains committed to maintaining a strong destination presence, focusing on key leisure trade events and targeting business from across the globe, this year to include Spain and China. During the year the Sales team will attend a total of 20 trade shows, exhibitions and organised sales initiatives.

Member participation is sought for a number of these sales opportunities which assists in strengthening the destination sell and sales conversion, as well as driving business to member products. This provides a source of marketing income to support the activities.

An integrated programme of sales calls has been included within the 2013-2014 plan, prioritised on the following criteria:

- Tour Operator business with direct access to Belfast;
- Trade prospects with existing link with Northern Ireland (cultural, business or leisure);
- Follow-up activity with active leads from show attended.

Sales calls will be planned, where possible, in conjunction with colleagues from Tourism Ireland. This allows BVCB to benefit from the on-the-ground expertise in-market and the contacts already established by Tourism Ireland, thus promoting an integrated approach between both organisations.

The plan has allocated £40,250 against costs for undertaking this activity to generate 245 leads (representing an increase of 37% on 2012-2013). This includes £10,000 for costs towards stand design, photography and production of new travel trade collateral. An income target of £10,000 is to be achieved through member participation.

Communications and PR

Communications and PR play a key role in BVCB's overall integrated marketing, sales and brand strategy, directing all communications and covering both corporate and consumer messaging.

A new and targeted communications activity programme will be developed focusing on the domestic, ROI, GB and direct access markets with particular emphasis on identified priority segments, providing destination stand-out for Belfast and assisting in driving overnight stays to the City.

The Communications team will use a selection of traditional and new channels presenting unique Belfast experiences to reach, engage, inspire and activate across the range of different consumer segments.

Communications will respond to local and international press information enquiries providing content, images and comment to promote and enhance Belfast as a new, must visit destination in all our markets. Consumer messaging will be tailored appropriately to the market, promoting Belfast's unique tourism experiences, welcome and vibe.

The World Police and Fire Games, along with the relocation and opening of the new Belfast Welcome Centre, will be a key project for communications and PR activity in 2013. Tactical plans are being developed to communicate to all BVCB's stakeholder audiences and maximise the PR opportunities to promote Belfast as a top European destination.

Key elements of communication activity will include:

- Press and PR activity – deliver a continuous and sustained calendar of PR activity through planned press releases, media events, press fams and multi-channel communication support to promote Belfast's tourism activities, events and experiences as well as highlighting city tourism successes.
- Media Briefings – a series of media events and briefings incorporating key stakeholders and as part of an on-going media relations development in support of destination marketing campaigns. These will be organised in all main markets, as well as ensuring the supply of timely information, images and newsworthy stories on a regular and sustained basis.
- Inbound media fam visits – working with NITB and Tourism Ireland, BVCB will support the generation and servicing of individual and group media familiarisation visits to Belfast from key target markets.
- Press Centre – an online media and press resource will also be developed with the gotobelfast.com corporate website to enhance the media information service and deliver of news, imagery and copy.
- WPFG – BVCB will maximise its reporting of good news stories during the Games by working in partnership in the lead up and during the Games with WPFG-2013, NITB and Belfast City Council.

- Relocation of BWC – the Marketing and Communications team will provide support to the project team in the lead up to the relocation and opening of the Belfast Welcome Centre. Tactical, promotional plans will be developed in close consultation with BCC and NITB to position the new centre as a flagship tourist information centre for Northern Ireland and to support the launch event.

Communications and PR activity is evaluated by the resultant coverage and exposure in world-wide media - measured against an advertising equivalence target of £3m. A total budget of £110,500 has been allocated to deliver all communications and PR events and activities, together with agency costs and support materials.

Private Sector Commercial Sponsorships

BVCB has longstanding relationships with its two key private sector sponsors – Diageo and Value Cabs, which are projected to account for sponsorship income of £100,000 in 2013-2014. Recognising the need to demonstrate value for money, BVCB has had detailed discussions with both sponsors and strategies aligned to their brand objectives e.g. less focus on general brand promotion and more “call to action” opportunities; these discussions provide the basis of the commercial sponsorship activity for the incoming year, along with more regular communication and feedback.

Digital and Online Marketing

The use of digital and online channels is now a core element of BVCB’s marketing strategy and continues to offer new opportunities for communicating and engaging with Belfast’s priority target markets and segments.

BVCB’s objective is to be at the forefront of digital communication and to ensure that emerging digital, marketing and communication channels are fully exploited so as to engage with users in an appropriate and highly targeted way.

The 2013-2014 operational plan for digital and online marketing and communications activity includes:

- Search engine optimisation, email marketing, and social media will be utilised to drive traffic to the gotobelfast.com site, generating over 900,000 visitors in 2013-2014. This will be achieved by keeping content continually updated and optimised to the target audience and the devices they use to access gotoBelfast’s digital content.
- Priority development of e-mail marketing mailing list, to provide highly targeted opportunities for direct marketing in real time. This will require the development of a suitable e-DM (e-Direct Marketing) database which will enable the marketing team to segment data, based on user behaviour and demographics.
- Further exploiting the use of social media channels in BVCB’s marketing and communications activity, providing instant access to Belfast’s target audience and the ability to engage in real time discussion.

- With the increase in the use of smart phones and tablets, a particular focus will be made on optimising the user experience of gotoBelfast.com on mobile devices and further developing the iPhone app and creating a new Android version.
- The website and related digital platforms provide BVCB with potential revenue opportunities to generate future income streams in support of its activities, for example through banner advertising, endorsements, sponsorship, posts and email marketing. Plans will be developed whilst maintaining the relationship with current sponsors and RTPs (Regional Tourism Partners), to assess the degree and variety of opportunities that exist.

The projected cost of delivery of the digital strategy in 2013-2014 is £65,000 to include web hosting, web services and applications.

Publications

BVCB produces a range of high quality printed material for marketing, sales and visitor servicing. Publications to be produced in 2013-2014 include the annual Belfast Visitor Guide, the bi-monthly About Belfast guide, and Belfast TIC and visitor maps.

The Belfast Visitor Guide raises the profile of the city region and markets the area, accommodation providers and tourism product to out-of-state markets via Tourism Ireland's overseas offices. Small quantities of the Visitor Guide will also be distributed through the Belfast Welcome Centre, NI TIC network, NITB Dublin, Connolly Station and Port of Cairnryan. The 2014 Belfast Visitor Guide will be developed in quarter 2/3 of 2013 and in time for World Travel Market in London in November 2013. It will include a print run of 25,000 copies and a web optimised digital version of the guide will be created and uploaded to gotobelfast.com. Total cost to produce the publication will be £20,000, of which £10,000 will be offset by advertising income generated from BVCB members.

The About Belfast publication is regarded as the official visitor guide to Belfast, containing events information, editorial features, maps and A directory of accommodation, attractions, tours, activities, arts and entertainment venues, pubs, clubs, restaurants and cafes. The guide has an ABC classification of 57,000 copies on average per edition (based on 6 editions per year), making it the highest distributed free consumer magazine in Northern Ireland. In 2013-2014, About Belfast will produce 5 editions per year, equating to 300,000 printed copies plus a digital version. The distribution plan (per edition) of approx 500 outlets will include the BVCB membership database, ports of entry, NI TIC network, NITB Dublin, Connolly Station and Port of Cairnryan. About Belfast will also be available in digital formats – downloadable from gotobelfast.com; gotobelfast app and iBooks. The total cost to design and produce About Belfast is £150k and the advertising income target is set at £50k.

Two maps have been designed and will be produced in the 2013-2014 year. The Belfast TIC map will have a print run of 130,000 to include an A3 double sided tear off map for TIC use. Distribution is mainly for Belfast Welcome Centre, Airport TIC's, NITB Dublin, Connolly Station and NI TIC Network. In addition, the Belfast Visitor Map

(brochure version) will be produced with a print run of 15,000 and future versions will be supported by commercial income and advertising plans being developed.

4.4 Business Tourism

The year 2012 has involved a period of significant change for Business Tourism with new key staff in place and a new approach to targeting conference business. The strategic and organisational change that has taken place is now beginning to yield very encouraging results. Business Tourism's priority for 2013-2014 is to continue to inject focused sales momentum to achieve its ambitious year 3 targets.

In 2013-2014 the Business Tourism team will focus on achieving its conference targets by increasing sales by a further 38% to £37.7 million. This sales performance would put BVCB on a par with Dublin Convention Bureau, despite having 14,000 fewer hotel bedrooms, circa 90 less air routes, and limited exhibition and breakout facilities (until completion of new Waterfront development). This equates to an additional 10,000 delegates and £10 million to the local economy.

Achievement of its 2013-2014 conference targets will however be dependent upon resourcing within the Business Tourism team. The 2013-2014 Business Tourism operational plan therefore assumes that there will be a further 12 month extension to the two additional temporary sales manager contracts⁴. This extension to crucial sales resources will underpin future conference sales growth and facilitate the achievement of the Business Tourism sales targets.

Sustaining the sales resources at this level will also facilitate the Business Tourism team in delivering on its additional key projects for 2013-2014, such as the development of the Corporate Ambassador Programme, corporate sales development and implementation of the Conference Industry Taskforce. The increased sales momentum will also be necessary to support the increase in conference capacity created by the new Belfast Waterfront extension in 2016.

Corporate Ambassador Programme

The aim of the Corporate Ambassador Programme is to engage local corporate ambassadors (as well as the Northern Ireland Diaspora) who have the contacts, networks and influence to assist BVCB to attract out-of-state corporate events. This will be achieved by extending the Conference Ambassador Programme into the corporate sector. Already working with NITB on this initiative, BVCB will seek to develop a partnership or "Team Belfast" approach with key business groups such as Invest NI, NI Connections, Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce (NICC), Institute of Directors (IoD), CBI etc. The programme will initially be launched and promoted through all these key business groups to increase awareness and recruit potential ambassadors from within their networks.

Working with partners to identify best prospects, BVCB will develop strong corporate networks of CEO influencers for events such as staff conferences, sales events, training, client and incentive events. The strategic approach of using CEO level

⁴ In 2012, BVCB's Board of Directors approved the appointment of 2 conference sales managers for 12 months ending June 2013. The Business Plan now assumes that the contracts will be extended for a further 12 months, ending June 2014.

influencers to target other CEOs will generate opportunities that may not otherwise be achieved.

BVCB will work with partners to target key event agents and intermediaries that place corporate bookings and identify how best to service their event requirements. BVCB will play a key role in lead generation and research; it will also promote Belfast through new tradeshows, for example, the UK Meetings Show and Square Meal Venue and events and through promotion of Belfast at NI Alumni and Diaspora events. BVCB will identify Meet in Ireland breakfast / lunch events within key GB corporate offices, in partnership with Tourism Ireland GB offices.

Target prospects include the FDI company network, corporates with a significant local NI office, NI corporate from key international sectors, university GB and ROI research partners.

Targets for the Corporate Ambassador Programme in 2013-2014 are to recruit at least 20 key corporate ambassadors who can assist BVCB in attracting new MICE business to Belfast.

Review of Current Subvention Programme

The market for conferences is highly competitive, with many of the top cities using subvention funds to attract not-for-profit sector conferences. The current Belfast Subvention fund from BCC and NITB is worth £145,000 per annum. Demand for subvention is high and is likely to increase in future; however the elongated sales and planning cycle for association conferences and the current financial procedures required to submit a subvention application make it difficult to secure and release subvention funding within a 12 month period.

Two key factors make it difficult to physically allocate the subvention funds and ensure that they are utilised:

- The current process requires clients to submit a copy of their past conference income and expenditure as well as a full income and expenditure report for the potential Belfast conference which can be difficult for clients to produce within the timescale required.
- Funds can only be issued to clients once they have contracted with venues and paid the costs which can be reimbursed through the scheme. Increasingly this is being delayed as clients negotiate later payment terms in order to manage cash-flow in advance of income being received.
- The minimum bed night figure (600) is not applicable to smaller (volume) conferences which the industry now needs, and corporate events are not eligible.

Other competing cities such as Dublin, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow have more client friendly subvention processes in place. BVCB will undertake a review of the scheme in 2013 to identify potential improvements that could make it more accessible and report back to the subvention funders.

Establishment of a joint BVCB and Belfast Waterfront extension marketing plan for out-of-state business

BVCB and Belfast Waterfront have identified the need to work closely together to maximise opportunities for the City in advance of the completion of the venue's extension. All top performing conference destinations have a critical success factor, the conference centre and destination work together as 'one team' and take a collective approach to securing conference business. BVCB and Belfast Waterfront will develop a joint marketing plan in quarter 1 of 2013, for implementation in the run-up to the opening of the extension in 2016. A number of joint marketing initiatives have already been planned for 2013-2014 including:

- Joint sales calls in Brussels, Washington and London
- London Waterfront launch event
- Washington Waterfront launch event
- Participation in all major trade shows and client events
- Joint lead generation programme and research to identify the Top 500 prospects for the new Waterfront extension.

Corporate Sales Development

Following consultations with NITB, Northern Ireland Hotels Federation (NIHF), members and stakeholders, it has been agreed that BVCB will support the implementation of a sales plan to proactively target the corporate market in 2013-2014. This concept was developed to address sustained market failure in the corporate segment, which is a crucial area of business for many of BVCB's members. The sales plan will focus on attracting conferences generating at least 100 out-of-state bednights and above.

Whilst the majority of BVCB's activity will be focused on its priority target of city wide, high value association business generating 600-6,000 bed nights, the corporate sales plan will mean a slight change of focus to include corporate events with a lower economic value. It is anticipated that 80% of BVCB conference wins will still be at the higher value level, while 20% will be for events at 100 bed nights and above.

Implementation of Industry Taskforce Sales Plan

The development of an Industry Taskforce was a recommendation in BVCB's 2011-2014 Business Plan. The conference taskforce was established in late 2012 with the aim of creating an industry-led sales team who can utilise their collective knowledge, expertise and experience to assist BVCB in securing new conference business for Belfast.

Over the next year the Taskforce will meet regularly; its role will be to help identify new conference opportunities, contacts and ambassadors for the City. The taskforce will also review BVCB's own sales pipeline to help close sales and increase conversion rates. Where bids have been lost, the Taskforce will provide input to objectively assess the issues contributing to lost business and any relevant learning to be applied in future.

This shared activity should drive business conversion by providing BVCB with access to shared industry knowledge, contacts and expertise. It will also identify and participate in additional tactical sales and marketing activity, promotions and campaigns.

The target for new leads generated through the Industry Taskforce is 50 out-of-state conference leads worth approximately £25m in economic impact.

4.5 MEMBERSHIP

Membership Income and growth

BVCB is projecting to generate membership income of £175k in the year 2013-2014, representing an increase of £10k over projected membership income for the current year (based on a forecast income of £165,000 for the current financial year / 94% of target). An operational budget of £18,000 (as per 2012-2013) has been allocated to the support of the membership engagement strategy.

The income fee target will be achieved by recruiting circa 80 new members in 2013-2014. BVCB has recognised that the potential for increasing membership in the higher fee membership band is limited, as the key organisations at this level are already members. The majority of new members are therefore likely to be at the entry level fee band and will include restaurants, pubs and smaller businesses.

Retention

The membership engagement strategy will also involve achieving higher retention levels than in the previous three years. The target for 2013-2014 is that any drop in income from non-renewing members should not exceed £5k or be greater than 20 members. This is a lower number of non-renewals than the average of 50 per annum in each of the previous financial years.

The new membership engagement plans include: "Locking-in" existing members and increasing loyalty to BVCB will be achieved through more proactive engagement and communications. A member contact plan has already been developed, which outlines the level of engagement and communication that each member should expect from BVCB. The member contact plan also ensures that BVCB staff recognises the new approach to segmenting the membership and the different benefits associated with each segment.

Re-launch and refresh the membership scheme

BVCB will "refresh and re-launch" its membership scheme, focusing particularly on benefits and value for money within each of the membership bands, and present it to both new and existing members throughout the incoming year. This will also include the launch of a new membership charter.

This level of proactive engagement with members will support the organisation's role as "champion" to its members and will reinforce BVCB's position as a member's voice for tourism and hospitality in greater Belfast.

Events programme

BVCB will significantly increase its member events programme which will now include up to 14 social, educational and networking events in 2012-2013. It will also take a partnership approach in delivering aspects of this programme by working with Belfast City Council through its Destination Belfast initiative. The new programme will include:

- 8 member master-class events (BCC/BVCB)
- AGM
- 2x Business Tourism events
- 2 x Leisure / Digital events
- 2 x social events (May 13 & Dec 13)
- Hosted member tables at up to 9 key corporate events
- Business Plan Update and Marketing Opportunities Launch

The events programme will also retain key member events which have regularly been part of BVCB's member offering, including sector meeting, business planning and marketing planning opportunities.

Membership satisfaction

For the first time, BVCB will implement an annual membership satisfaction survey. Member satisfaction with BVCB will be measured in quarter 4 2012-2013 and a target established for 2013-2014 in order to identify the impact of the new member engagement strategy and to identify any further improvements to the membership scheme.

4.6 VISITOR SERVICING

The Belfast Welcome Centre, Belfast International Airport TIC and George Best Belfast City Airport TIC are dealt with in separate business plans but the overall income and expenditure for each is included in the BVCB financial tables in section 5 and the targets for 2013-2014 are outlined in section 6.

2013 is going to be a pivotal year for BVCB's Visitor Servicing function.

- The management and planning of the design, move and operation of the new Centre and the staff training required to deliver the new type of service and technologies that will be employed in the Centre.
- In addition, BVCB is also responsible for handling the accommodation bookings for the World Police and Fire Games in August 2013; another major additional task.
- If funding can be secured, Phase 2 of the Belfast Visitor Pass will also be developed towards the end of 2013, to go live by June 2014; again a substantial and time consuming project.

- New funding and operating models need to be developed for the airport TICs, to accommodate the reduction in funding from NITB and the plans by the airports to redevelop their respective arrivals areas. Immediate funding needs to be found to enable them to maintain a status quo for 2013/14, and then a longer term solution needs to be developed for 2014/15 onwards.

Belfast Welcome Centre

The Welcome Centre will continue to operate in its current format and location for the first 6 months of 2013/14, with minimal disruption to services during September 2013 as the operation moves to the new location. When the Centre moves to its new location and opens as the *Visit Belfast* Welcome Centre, its core services will remain the same, but the way in which they are delivered will change, with a different look and feel to the Centre and new technologies.

Staff will no longer be predominantly counter based, and instead will be 'meeting and greeting' visitors to the Centre. New technology within the new Centre will include interactive touch-screens, plasma screens, wi-fi zone for downloading apps, portable handheld devices for staff to sell tours and events and dedicated ticket kiosks with staffed and self service options. Less floor space will be available for merchandise sales and the product range will be rationalised and revamped, to focus on differentiated products and local crafts. A retail plan is currently being developed, and it is projected that merchandise sales will grow as a result. There will be considerably more opportunity for income from advertising space, and it is anticipated that the Centre's Ticketing role will also continue to grow.

An outlined Communications Plan for the opening of the new centre is included in Appendix IV.

The new Centre and the visitor servicing plans are consistent with all the relevant tourism strategies for Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole:

- Opening of the new BWC in a ground floor city centre location (*scheduled for end Sept 2013*);
- Roll out of newer technologies in the new BWC, used to ensure an integrated link with other outreach information points and the two airport TICs (*scheduled for end Sept 2013 and ongoing roll out to TICs and outreach points in phase two scheduled for to be complete by December 2014*);
- Development and support of local information points across the City, including points across the various 'tourist destinations/quarters', to ensure that visitors have a seamless experience (*underway and ongoing*);
- Further development and roll out of the Belfast Visitor Pass, to include restaurants and a wider range of service providers (*development planned for 2013, for launch 2014*); and
- Development of an on-line city planner for the industry, tracking conferences and major tourism events and marketing initiatives in the City (*already in place*).

The BWC Business Plan details the projected income and expenditure of the BWC for 2013/14 and 2014/15, and also highlights 3 other 'special' projects for which BWC/BVCB will need additional one-off funding:

- Development of Phase 2 of the Belfast Visitor Pass;
- Additional staff to service the WPPFG
- Cruise Monitoring Officer.

Airport TICS Operational Plans

A separate Business Plan has been prepared for the airport TICS.

The BIA TIC is projected to handle 68,437 counter enquiries in 2013-2014 (not including those who come in and browse during the day and the evenings, or telephone enquiries), which would result in an additional £1.75 million spend in the local economy.

The GBBCA TIC is projected to handle 45,891 counter enquiries in 2013-2014 resulting in an additional £1.19 million spend in the local economy.

The strategic need and importance of the airport TICS has been acknowledged. However, both airport TICS are challenged by funding and commercial pressures – whilst demand for the TICS is expected to continue to grow in 2013, funding has been reduced. In parallel, both airports are considering redeveloping their arrivals areas and it has been recommended that the TIC needs to invest in more digital technologies. These pressures are coming to bear in a year when BVCB's Visitor Servicing already has a number of major projects in hand – the relocation of the Welcome Centre and handling the accommodation bookings for the World Police and Fire Games and the planned development of Phase 2 of the Belfast Visitor Pass. Each of these projects is highly important, time consuming and resource heavy, and will have to be priorities for BVCB in 2013/14.

Therefore, the priority issues for the airport TICS over the course of 2013/14 will be:

- Handling the anticipated ***increase in visitors*** as a result of:
 - the World Police and Fire Games, and as part of an integrated plan with the Belfast Welcome Centre and hub information points;
 - Derry/Londonderry's City of Culture status;
 - and other key City events including the Belfast 400 celebrations, the Féile 25th Anniversary events and Food and Music Week Festivals.

The total number of enquiries handled by the airport TICS is projected to increase by 7,702 in 2012/13, whilst total gross income is projected to increase by 34,750 – an increase of 5% and 12% respectively.

- ***Agreeing development plans with the airports.***

BIA is planning to redevelop its arrivals area, which may include relocating the TIC to a more strategic location so as to maximise its exposure to visitors. These development

plans should increase the footfall and number of enquiries to the TIC, and so any forward plans must consider the most effective way to handle the uplift in business. Whilst the redevelopment plans are unlikely to take effect in 2013/14, plans will be developed over the course of the year and BVCB will work closely with the Airport and its funders to scope out the most appropriate and sustainable model for the relocated TIC.

Similarly, GBBCA is looking at options to reconfigure its arrivals and check in areas, to ensure that it is making best use of the space. These plans could have implications for the location of the TIC and its operating model, with options such as shared services, different size of space, and different locations under consideration. These plans will be worked through with the airport during 2013/14 to agree a model for 2014/15 onwards.

- Securing '*alternative funding*' for 2013/14 and developing *longer term Business Model* for 2014/15 onward.

As explained earlier, BVCB needs to find additional funding for 2013/14, to replace the reduced funding from NITB. BVCB is currently in discussion with Derry~Londonderry City of Culture with a view to one-off funding for the two airport TICs – but particularly the TIC at BIA to take on a specific role in promoting the City of Culture through the TIC.

Over the course of 2013/14, management will also need to finalise the future operating and funding model for the TICs from April 2014 onwards, which will encompass the impact of the Airport's plans to redevelop the Arrivals area, the roll out of technologies employed in the new Welcome Centre and the further reductions in NITB funding. There are a number of options and models to be considered. However, at all costs, it is essential that the level of service and visitor experience is not compromised.

Local Tourism Destinations

One of the key themes of Belfast City Council's Integrated Strategic Framework is to develop Local Tourism Destinations, in order to extend the tourism offer outside the city centre, spread the benefits of tourism and in general lift the standard of the visitor experience across the city.

The Local Tourism Destinations are neighbourhoods/quarters with the potential to become local destinations but still requiring development of the visitor offering.

The rationale is that, as a result of developing these Local Tourism Destinations, new city wide themes will be identified based on product strengths across the city. At a local level, it will allow local businesses, attractions and communities to influence and be part of shaping the city's product development, visitor servicing and marketing strategies and more importantly promote local clustering to target agreed segments/visitors.

The Framework identified the following 10 Local Tourism Destinations, based on their potential to add to the Belfast tourism offering;

1. Belfast Hills;
2. Connswater Community Greenway;
3. Cathedral Quarter;
4. Gaeltacht Quarter;
5. Lagan Corridor;
6. Lisburn Road;

7. North Belfast Cultural Corridor;
8. Queen's Quarter;
9. Shankill Quarter;
10. Titanic Quarter.

Blue Sail Destination Consultants were appointed by the Council in the summer 2012 to work with 5 of these areas, to help to define their unique selling points and develop a tourism development action plan for the destination:

- The Cathedral Quarter;
- Queens Quarter and Lisburn Road;
- The Shankill Quarter;
- The Gaeltacht Quarter; and
- East Belfast.

These destinations were selected on the basis of their readiness to deliver visitor experiences.

The draft Action Plan for The Gaeltacht Quarter was issued end 2012, and the Plans for the other key quarters are currently being finalised.

The Plans acknowledge that, to make the best progress, the Destinations should tap into and work closely with the different tourism development bodies already in place within the City. With this in mind, it is recommended that they should "use the marketing muscle of BVCB to get their message across".

Close working relationships will therefore be established between BVCB and the relevant 'champions' in each of the Tourism Destinations, to ensure that:

- BVCB and the visitor servicing staff are fully briefed on the key selling points and messages for each of the destinations, as well as any specific events or products being developed;
- The key selling messages for each destination are appropriately conveyed by BVCB in its marketing communications, and the destinations are appropriately profiled in the Welcome Centre (specific space will be allocated to profile the different Tourism Destinations in the new Visit Belfast Welcome Centre).
- BVCB can provide advice and expertise as required on marketing activities, research, monitoring and communications.

As an example, the Gaeltacht Quarter Action Plan includes the following specific actions involving BVCB during 2013-2014:

- 3 themed visitor itineraries to be developed and piloted during 2013, for roll out during 2014 (Failte Feirste Thiar and BVCB to lead)
- Develop a social media group in 2013 (Failte Feirste Thiar and BVCB to lead) and programme to develop social media skills
- Research and identify appropriate media and communications for different target audiences (Failte Feirste Thiar and BVCB to lead)
- Commission and manage the development of headline marketing communications strategy, including clarity on roles and responsibilities of different relevant partners (Failte Feirste Thiar and BVCB to lead)
- Regular liaison between BVCB and Failte Feirste Thiar on events and projects;
- Fam visits for BVCB staff and press to be organised to the region;

- BVCB to give appropriate space and profile to the Quarter in the new Welcome Centre.

Therefore, as the Tourism Destination Action plans are finalised, relevant staff in BVCB will:

- establish close working links with the tourism champions in each Destination, with a programme of regular formal update meetings;
- fully familiarise themselves with each of the Tourism Action Plans;
- organise FAM briefings and visits for all relevant staff, on the messages and products relevant to each Destination; and
- work with each of the destinations on the action points specific to their individual plans.

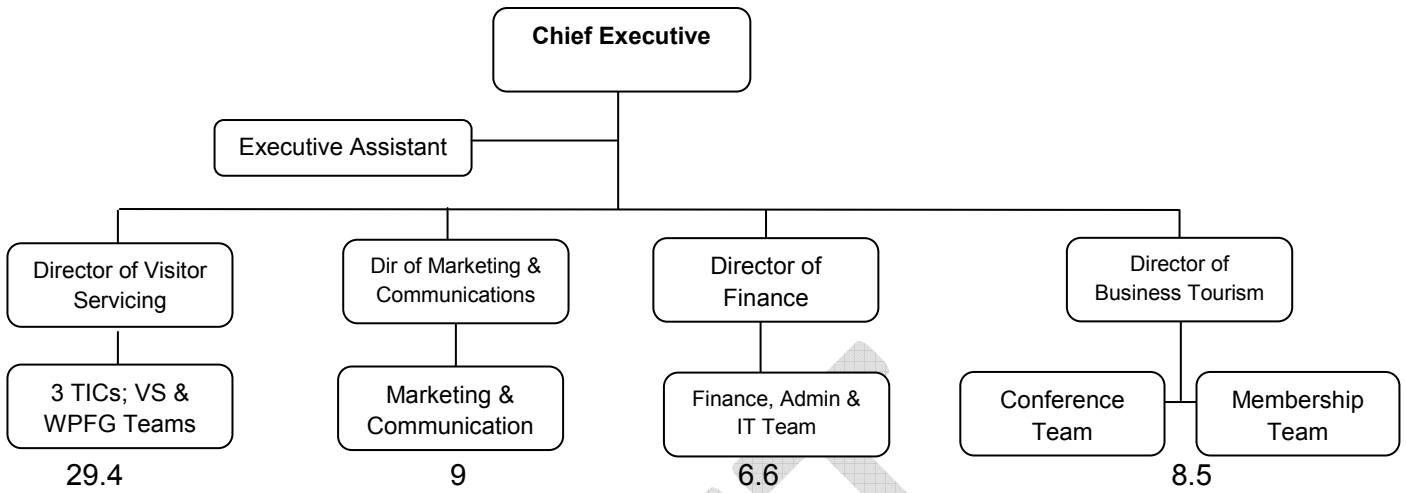
4.7 OPERATING STRUCTURE

The table below outlines the operating structure which is required to implement the 2013-2014 marketing and visitor servicing activities and deliver the associated KPIs.

Current approved labour headcount for 2012-2013 is 54 which includes the two extra temporary conference sales managers approved by the Board during 2012 and the two additional WPFM staff being funded by WPFM. The labour headcount for 2013-2014 increases from 54 to 55 employees and by 0.4 full-time equivalent posts – see Table below. This increase arises from the requirement for a dedicated seasonal cruise ship co-ordinator within Visitor Servicing, due to the significant number of cruise ships secured for 2013 (56). An extension of one year to April 2014 is required for the temporary conference sales managers in order to maintain the progress achieved in conference sales. These costs have been factored in the 2013-2014 budgets.

Composition of current and proposed BVCB operating structure:

	Approved 12/13		Proposed	
	Headcount	FTEs	Headcount	FTEs
CEO/Corporate Services	7	6.6	7	6.6
Marketing and Communications	9	9	9	9
Business tourism/membership	9	8.5	9	8.5
Visitor servicing	29	29	30	29.4
	54	53.1	55	53.5



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5. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2013-2014

The table below sets out the proposed budget for 2013-2014, with the latest 2012-2013 forecast to enable year-on-year comparisons to be made.

Budgeted income of £3.8 million in 2013-2014 is at a similar level to that being forecast for the current financial year, despite the anticipated 4.6% drop in public sector funding.

The ratio of Belfast City Council funding to other levered income in the 2013-2014 budget is £1: £1.09, compared with a latest forecast for the current year of £1: £1.04.

The ratio of overhead to operation is anticipated to improve in 2013-2014 to £1:£1.52 from the £1:£1.48 expected in the current year.

The budget for 2013-2014 includes an 8% year-on increase in private sector marketing income streams to reach a total of £850,250, made up of campaign partner income (44%), commercial membership fees (21%), corporate sponsorship (12%), advertising revenues (11%), business tourism and membership commercial income (6%) and partner income from exhibitions (6%). This increase is principally attributable to the greater exploitation of commercial opportunities within Business Tourism and the BVCB membership base. Trading, rental and other income from visitor servicing is budgeted to increase by 6% as the commercial opportunities presented by a relocated and completely updated and revitalised Visit Belfast Welcome Centre start to be realised.

BVCB finances 2012/13 - 2013/14

	Projected out turn	Budget
	2012/13	2013/14
	£	£
Income		
Reserves forward	168000	168000
Public sector		
BCC	1,886,115	1,827,465
Other local authority	60,000	60,000
NITB	416,500	359,251
NITB/BCC Conference Subvention	145,000	145,000
Total public sector	2,507,615	2,391,716
Private sector/commercial		
Corporate sponsorship	93117	100000
Commercial membership	175000	175000

62.7%

GB campaign partner income	187500	225000	
ROI/NI campaign partner income	180750	150000	
Advertising - About Belfast	52000	50000	
Advertising - other	16900	10000	
Leisure tourism exhibitions & fam trips - partner income	14000	10000	
Conference booking fees	21000	15000	
Commercial "pop up" opportunities		15000	
Membership initiatives		10000	
Advertising – conference guide	0	30000	
Advertising - other business tourism	5000	0	
Corporate ambassador scheme income	0	25000	
Business tourism exhibitions and fam trips - partner income	38230	34750	
Sundry Income	500	500	
Total private sector/commercial	783,997	850,250	
Visitor servicing – gross margin on trading and other income	385,502	407,558	
Total private sector and commercial	1,169,499	1,257,808	32.9%
Total income	3,845,114	3,817,524	100.0%

	Projected out turn	Budget	
	2012/13	2013/14	
	£	£	
Expenditure			
Marketing and sales	2,297,445	2,292,416	60.3%
Visitor servicing	1,161,514	1,119,229	29.4%
Overheads and admin	388,403	391,961	10.3%
Total expenditure	3,847,362	3,803,606	100.0%
Surplus/(deficit)	-2,248	13,918	

Marketing and Sales Expenditure

	Projected out turn	Budget
	2012/13	2013/14
	£	£
Leisure tourism marketing campaigns		
GB city breaks campaign	310000	356000
Republic of Ireland campaigns	150750	150000
NI retail/festivals campaign	215690	162000
Total campaigns	676,440	668,000
Leisure campaign support activity		
Publications	203400	183000
Exhibitions shows and sales visits	26750	35250
Familiarisation visits	6000	5000

Campaign evaluation studies	57000	50000
Cruise marketing	25500	29500
Other partner marketing activity	15000	0
Sponsorship activation costs	14000	0
Bannering	1500	0
Total leisure campaign support activity	349,150	302,750
Communications		
Improving competitiveness	11200	8000
Media briefings/events	12000	12000
PR Activities	58500	48500
PR Expenses	30000	33000
Press fam trips	20000	10000
Total communications	131,700	111,500
Web and digital		
Site hosting/support	6000	6000
Development	10000	20000
Web/digital marketing	43300	39000
Total web and digital	59,300	65,000
Membership	18000	18000

Business Tourism

	Projected out turn	Budget
	2012/13	2013/14
	£	£
Business tourism marketing		
Exhibitions and sales visits	100800	124500
Advertising	10000	7500
Conference guide	0	15000
Ambassador scheme	30000	35000
Association and membership	12700	12700
Bids	45000	30000
Site inspections/familiarisation trips	25245	20000
Primary and secondary marketing	2600	4000
Booking commission and database management	11700	11700
Subvention	145000	145000
Total business tourism marketing	383,045	405,400

Total marketing and sales operational costs	1,617,635	1,570,650
Marketing and sales staff costs	679,810	721,766
Total marketing and sales costs	2,297,445	2,292,416

Total Visitor Servicing expenditure

	Projected out turn	Budget
	2012/13	2013/14
Belfast Welcome Centre	953948	914,368
BIA TIC	124918	118,661
GBBCA TIC	82648	86,200
Total	1,161,514	1,119,229

Total Visitor Servicing income

	Projected out turn	Budget	
	2012/13	2013/14	
BCC	539425	529,465	47.5%
NITB	229000	171,751	15.4%
Private Sector/Commercial	385502	407,558	36.5%
Belfast RTP Support	5000	7,000	0.6%
Total	1,158,927	1,115,774	100.0%

In addition to the above detailed expenditure and funding, visitor servicing also has a number of additional 'special projects' planned for 2013/14 and for which additional one-off funding will be required; these are as follows:

- WPFPG: Additional funding of £19k towards increasing current BWC and airport staffing in the run up and during the World Police and Fire Games, as well as providing manned pop up TICs at 4 venues during the period of the Games and registration. Funding will be sought. If this cost was shared between WPFPG, BCC and NITB, it would equate to £6, 300 per funder.
- Cruise Ship: Additional funding of £2k to continue to provide a Cruise Ship Monitoring officer. (Monitoring Bus tour operator activity at the shuttle buss terminus)
- Belfast Visitor Pass: Additional funding towards the Phase 2 Belfast Visitor Pass. The development costs would mainly be incurred in 2013/14, with a view to launching the new Pass in June 2014. Business Case was completed end 2011 and the costs of developing Phase 2 are noted below. BCC and NITB funded Phase 1 of the Visitor Pass. The Phase 2 project will also require specific funding support, and discussions have been taking place with both BCC and NITB. The Business Case included costs for employing a project officer. However, given current resources and skills, BVCB feels that this post will not be required in year one of the project, but a sum of £12k per annum in years 2 and 3 towards the HR resources required

in delivering the project. The cost of the project would be as follows:

	Project cost	Cost per funder (based on 2 funders)
Year 1 (2013/14)	£70,000	£35,000
Year 2 (2014/15)	£37,000	£18,500
Year 3 (2015/16)	£32,000	£16,000

These specific projects will require additional 'one off' funding over and above BWC's core budget outlined previously. Specific project proposals will be presented to potential funders. However, as they are critical projects of strategic importance, they are being highlighted in this Business Plan so that they are included in funders' considerations of future funding commitments.

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6. 2013-2014 TARGETS, MONITORING & MEASUREMENT

6.1 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

BVCB's 2012-2013 operational business plan identified twenty KPIs which have focused the organisation on results driven reporting and monitoring throughout 2012-2013. In the third and final year of its 2011-2014 business plan, BVCB will largely continue to report against these KPIs, with amended targets, in order to achieve a level of consistency and facilitate more accurate comparison year on year.

A number of additional KPIs have been included; these specifically reflect priority areas of activity for BVCB in 2013-2014.

6.2 2013-2014 KPIs – LEISURE TOURISM, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Leisure Tourism will now report on a number of KPIs relating to digital marketing and social media. This reflects the increasing importance of such channels to leisure marketing and its particular importance to the best prospect segments discussed in section 4.

The advertising equivalence target has been reduced for 2013-2014 even though it is very likely that Leisure Tourism will meet or even exceed its higher current target. This reduction acknowledges that exceptional PR opportunities were generated by Titanic Belfast 2012 internationally and that it will not be possible to maintain this level of momentum.

The value of publications income will remain as per 2012-2013 even though the main income generator for publications, About Belfast, will only have 5 editions next year, compared to 6 in the current year. An additional KPI has been included to monitor ABC circulation figures for About Belfast, which is of importance to potential advertisers.

The targets for GB and ROI city break campaign impact remains as for 2012-2013. Given to date only the first campaign evaluation results are available, it is too early to assess the potential for increasing this target.

Leisure Tourism Marketing and Communications 2013-2014	
KPI	Target
- Number of visits to websites	900,000
- Increased participation on BVCB's social media channels by 20,000	85,000
- Increase consumer email marketing database	10,000 new subscribers
- Advertising equivalence from PR activity including press visits and media briefings (2012 target was £4m)	£3 million
- Number of travel leads secured	245
- Value of corporate sponsorship	£100k
- Value of partner income from leisure tourism	£385,000

campaigns and <u>exhibitions</u>	
- Value of publications income from visitor guides	£60,000
- Average ABC rating per edition of About Belfast	57,000
- GB City Breaks campaigns – Return on Investment	15:1
- Number of bednights	70,000
- Value of spend	£5.7 million
- Island of Ireland campaigns - Return on Investment	8:1
- Number of visits (day and overnight)	65,000
- Value of direct spend	£2.4 million
- Number of cruise ships	60 ships
- Resultant day visits	115,000 visitors and crew
- Spend secured for 2014	£6 million

6.3 KPIs – BUSINESS TOURISM

Business Tourism's target in the 2011-2014 Business Plan for the year 2013-2014 is to achieve £37.7 million in weighted business. This represents a substantial increase over the current year's target and growth of 38% between 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

The target for new proposals/bids for association conferences has also increased, rising from 150 bids in the current year to 200 in 2013-2014. The target for value of bids will rise by 47% from £54.6 million to £80 million.

Booking fees have proven consistently difficult to secure at the KPI target levels and is difficult for the Business Tourism team to influence, as outlined in section 2.3. This target has been revised downwards to £15,000 in 2013-2014 from £30,000 in 2012-2013.

Key Performance Indicator 2013-2014	Target
Business Tourism	
- Number of delegates	31,000 delegates
- Bed-nights	62,000 bednights
- Value of conference business won for Belfast by Business Tourism	£37.7m
- Number of proposals/bids in 2013-2014 for	200 bids

association conferences	
- Value of Proposals/Bids	£80m
- Average of Conversion rate over the year	40% conversion
- Value of conference accommodation booking fees	£15,000
- Number of new conference ambassadors recruited of which 20 will be corporate ambassadors	60
- Number of conference leads	200 leads
- Value of conference leads secured	£100m
- Number of bureau sales appointments / calls	150

6.4 KPIs – MEMBERSHIP

Overall membership fee income is projected to grow marginally, despite the recruitment target of 80 new members in 2013-2014. The profile of new members is likely to be dominated by smaller businesses taking up membership at the entry level. Whilst the member engagement strategy is designed to maximise retention rates, some loss is inevitable amongst smaller business members in current market conditions.

A new KPI has been included on member satisfaction with BVCB; a realistic baseline of satisfaction will be established by undertaking a satisfaction survey in 2012-2013, with targets to be set based on achieving improvements over the baseline levels.

Key Performance Indicator 2013-2014	Target
Membership	
- Value of membership fee income (+10k on current year)	£175,000
- Membership recruitment	80 new members
- % membership retained	90%
- Number of non renewals to not exceed 20	20 non-renewals
- Members Satisfaction	TBC *Target will be established on the results of the 2012-2013 survey

6.5 KPIs – VISITOR SERVICING

KPIs – VISITOR SERVICING	Key Performance Indicator 2013 -2014
- Number of visitors for TIC network	442,194
- Total number of enquiries	595,699
- Gross profit margin and value of other income for TIC network	407,558
- Annual satisfaction index for TIC network	80-85%

6.6 KPI MONITORING AND MEASUREMENT

Progress against KPIs will continue to be monitored on a quarterly basis and presented to the BVCB Board of Directors. A number of performance measurements will continue to be based upon the use of industry accepted standards e.g. for Business Tourism the Visit Britain Delegate Expenditure Survey 2008. BVCB is committed to commissioning independent, bespoke research to evaluate the impact of its City Break campaigns.

6.7 CONCLUSION

This plan will deliver 312,000 bednights and visitors for Belfast City generating £60 million spend in the local economy giving a return on investment of 1:16, and a leverage for Belfast City Council of 1:1.09 with £1.4 million, or 37% of the operating budget generated through commercial activity.

APPENDIX I: PERFORMANCE AGAINST 2012-2013 KPIs

Leisure Tourism Marketing and Communications

Leisure Tourism, Marketing and Communications performed very well against their KPIs in 2012-2013 with the majority of targets estimated to be met or exceeded.

The results presented below illustrate performance for the first 9 months of the current year. Leisure Tourism, Marketing and Communications remain on track to deliver another year of solid results. Leisure Tourism targets became more challenging in 2012-2013, with the introduction of KPI targets for partner income generated and on the economic impact of campaigns. KPIs became more focused on impact and outputs, rather than measuring activity.

Of particular note is the increase in the number of cruise ships booked in the current year, compared with the previous year. By the end of quarter 2 the full target for 2013 cruise ships had already been achieved. The cruise ship KPI is now monitored against visitor numbers and estimated impact, as well as on the number of cruise ships.

Evaluation feedback from one GB co-op campaign to date has been very positive and indicates a higher economic return on marketing investment than projected in the KPIs.

Leisure Tourism, Marketing and Communications Performance Against KPIs 2012-2013 (9 months)		
KPI	Target for 12 months	Q1-Q3 (to 31st December 2012)
Average number of unique visitors per month to consumer web portal	59,000	62,445 On target
Number of travel leads secured	180	152 On target
Number of cruise ships and resultant day visits and spend secured for 2013	50 ships 80,000 visitors £3.5m	56 ships 111,000 visitors Target exceeded within 6 months
Advertising equivalence from PR activity including press visits and media briefings	£4m	£2.9m Slightly below target
Value of corporate sponsorship	£100k	£97k 97% achieved On target
Value of partner income from leisure tourism campaigns and exhibitions	£338k	£342,501k (+£100k in-kind from Easyjet) Target exceeded
Value of publications income from	£60k	£42,043 On target

visitor guides		
Number of bednights / value of spend from GB City Breaks campaigns	15:1 / 70,000 £5.7m	17:1 / 20,278 £1.56m Stena campaign results progressing well against target
Number of visits (day and overnight) and value of direct spend of ROI Island of Ireland retail and festival campaigns	8:1 /65,000 £2.4m	Evaluation underway

Business Tourism

Business tourism performance is substantially improved over 2011-2012 results, given that the re-structured team and new systems are now in place. Latest figures for quarter 3 2012-2013 continue to demonstrate that Business Tourism is very close to its target for the period and therefore on track to deliver its annual target for 2012-2013, which is a 70% increase in conference wins on the previous year.

Whilst the number of bids submitted is lower than anticipated at this stage in the year, the value of those bids is ahead of target by £2.3 million at the close of quarter 3. By the end of quarter 3 Business Tourism sales calls had already exceeded the annual target set for 2012-2013.

As explained already, conference accommodation booking fees will not achieved the target set for 2012-2013, largely due to market-led factors beyond the control of the Business Tourism team.

Business Tourism Performance Against KPIs 2012-2013 Q1-Q3		
Key Performance Indicator	Target	Q1-Q3 (to 31st December 2012)
Number of delegates, bed-nights and value of conference business won for Belfast by Business Tourism	- 21,000 delegates - 42,000 bednights -63,000 delegate days - £27.3 m	-14,935 delegates - 39,235 bednights - 43,155 delegate days - £19.1m Close to target
Number of proposals/bids in 2012 2013 for association conferences	- 150 bids / £54.6m - 50% conversion	- 71 bids / £43.3m - 60% conversion On target
Value of conference accommodation booking fees	£30k* (Note: forecast revised to 19,000)	£14,855 Below target
Number of new ambassadors recruited with potential conference enquiries	60	38 On target
Number of conference leads	£100m / 200 leads	£83.1 m / 120 leads On target

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Number of bureau sales appointments / calls	110	114 Ahead of target
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Membership

Membership fee income is unlikely to reach £175,000 in the current year and a more realistic forecast of £165k has been made. This is due to 38 non renewals from the previous year (2011-2012) coming to light in 2012-2013. These historic non-renewals equate to £13k loss of income which has been accounted for in the current year. Therefore, achieving £165k is an increase of £25k on 2011-2012 and growth of 18%.

Membership Performance Against KPIs 2012-2013 Q1-Q3		
Key Performance Indicator	Target	Q1-Q3 (31st December 2012)
Value of membership fee income	£175k	£129,309 Behind target – forecast is £165,000
% membership retained BVCB currently has 468 private sector members	95%	93%

Visitor Servicing

Visitor Servicing Performance Against KPIs in 2012/13		
Key Performance Indicator	Target	Q1 - Q3 (to 31st December 2012)
Number of visitors for TIC network and total number of enquiries	371,300	357,324
	495,000	451,555
Gross profit margin and value of other income for TIC network	£351k	£266k
Annual satisfaction index for TIC network	85-90%	Not yet available

**APPENDIX II: VISIT BELFAST CORPORATE NAME CHANGE FOR BELFAST VISITOR
AND CONVENTION BUREAU**

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SUMMARY

Implementation

- Recommend plan to the December Board
- Register Visit Belfast as the company name
- Finalise visual formats, variations and usage guidelines
- Register ownership as a trademark
- Plan implementation to roll-out during Jan-Apr 2013

Stakeholder communications

- Informal briefing with DETI Minister's private office;
- Collate key stakeholder database and agree communication formats;
- Develop key messages and Q&A for stakeholder/media use;
- Informal one-to-one or group briefings for key stakeholders and influencers (BCC, sponsors, NITB, etc).
- Audit completed of all required printed, digital and physical material with replacement plans
- External communications
- Main NI daily press/business monthlies
- Secure positive endorsement from stakeholders
- Update stationery and physical manifestation
- Re-name website and install pointers from old site
- New e-zine templates and email signatures
- Digital media outreach – Facebook/Twitter/blogs
- 'Go Live' date: agreed and implemented
- Roll-out of communications plan

APPENDIX III: OPERATIONAL PLANS – BUSINESS TOURISM

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BUSINESS TOURISM OPERATIONAL PLAN 2013/14 -DRAFT	
CONFERENCE SALES TARGETS (CATEGORY 1 & 2 ONLY)	
AREA	TARGET
Economic Impact	£37.7m
Delegates	31,000
Bed nights	62,000
Number of Conferences	75

SALES PRODUCTIVITY TARGETS				
AREA	MARKET SEGMENTS	DATE OF ACTIVITY	KEY OBJECTIVES TARGETS	ESTIMATED COSTS
Bids & Proposals	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	200 proposals / £80m 30% conversion rate (average proposal £400k)	£15,000 Bid support £2,000 Bid documents
Sales Calls: - NI (Amb) & ROI - GB - Europe & USA	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	Sales meetings with 150 clients. 70 50 30	£8,000 UK sales calls £7,000 European and US sales calls (Income: trade participation £1,000)
Site Inspections	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	Host 35 site inspections	£12,000

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FAM Trips – Buyers	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	Host 30 buyers on Belfast FAM trips	£8,000
Lead Generation	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	200 leads / £100m	£3,000
BVCB conference taskforce	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	<p>Development of the new industry-led sales team who will utilise their collective knowledge and networks to support BVCB in securing new conference business for Belfast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify a shared top prospect list for targeted and strategic marketing activity - generate approximately 50 <u>new</u> out-of-state conference leads for the city - Where possible, secure conference wins for periods of low occupancy, calendar ‘gaps’ and within the city’s sectoral strengths. 	
CRM	Association and Corporate	April 13- March 14	Client database maintenance	£3,700 chaser licence fee

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SALES EVENT OUTPUT TARGETS				
AREA	MARKET SEGMENTS	DATE OF ACTIVITY	KEY OBJECTIVES TARGETS	ESTIMATED COSTS (inc VAT)
Destination Showcase Event – Buyers	GB Association and Corporate	September 13	80 buyers	£30,000 (Income £12,000)
Trade Shows – Total leads: - Confex - EIBTM - IMEX Frankfurt - IMEX USA - UK Meetings Show - Square Meal Venues and Events	GB Association and Corporate EU Association and Corporate EU Association and Corporate US Association and Corporate GB Association and Corporate GB Corporate	March 14 November 13 May 13 October 13 July 13 September 13	Promote Belfast to 120 buyers Generate 40 leads (corporate and association)	Confex - £29,000 (inc dinner) EIBTM - £4,400 IMEX Frankfurt - £8,000 IMEX US - £10,800 UK Meetings show - £1,500 Square Meal - £1,000 <u>Income:</u> Confex (£3700) 4 partners @£800 and client dinner £500 EIBTM (£2,400) 1 partner IMEX Frankfurt (£6,000)

				3 partners @ £2,000 IMEX USA (£6150) 3 partners @ £2,050
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Client events:			<i>Promote Belfast as a conference destination to:</i>	
- BVCB Washington client event	US Association	October 13	40 association buyers	£10,000 (Trade income £1,500)
- London waterfront launch event (TI / Waterfront Led event)	GB Association and Corporate	July 13	50 GB association and corporate buyers	£2,000
- Tourism Ireland Chicago event	US Association	June 13	30 US association buyers	£1,500
- Tourism Ireland Brussels embassy event	EU Association	TBC	10 EU association buyers	£1,500 (Income £500)
- C&IT Forum	GB Association and Corporate	October 13	15 GB association and corporate buyers	£4,300 (Income £2,000)
- Tourism Ireland GB networking event London	GB Association and Corporate	November 13	40 GB buyers	£750
- Tourism Ireland Brussels association networking event	EU Association	June 13	20 EU association buyers	£750
- Ad hoc TI events	GB Corporate	TBC	Promote Belfast as a conference destination to potential GB clients	£1,000
			Engage NI Diaspora to help	

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(corporate) - Ad hoc NI connections events (corporate)	International Corporate	TBC	attract potential conferences and events to Belfast via Invest NI / Ni connections partnership	£3,000
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AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME TARGETS				
AREA	MARKET SEGMENTS	DATE OF ACTIVITY	KEY OBJECTIVES TARGETS	ESTIMATED COSTS /(INCOME)
Recruit new ambassadors with conference opportunities	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	80 new ambassadors	£35,000 £25,000 income forecast
Ezines – news and updates	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	4 ezines	
Newsletter – editorial, case studies etc	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	2 newsletters	
Loyalty event – Ambassadors	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	50 attendees	
Engagement events – Ambassadors	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	4 events	
Corporate Ambassador Programme / NI connections / TI events	Corporate	April 13 – March 14	Launch corporate ambassador programme in partnership with INI – details TBC	

ACCOMMODATION BOOKING SYSTEM				
AREA	MARKET SEGMENTS	DATE OF ACTIVITY	KEY OBJECTIVES TARGETS	ESTIMATED COSTS
Accommodation booking commissions	Association	April 13 – March 14	£15,000 income	£8,000 passkey system fees* (forecast based on bookings)
Launch accommodation up-sell packages to membership and trade	Association	April 13 – March 14	£1,500 income through advertising platforms to delegates booked via accommodation system.	

PRIMARY & SECONDARY MARKETING				
AREA	MARKET SEGMENTS	DATE OF ACTIVITY	KEY OBJECTIVES TARGETS	ESTIMATED COSTS
Support conferences to boost attendance at the 2014 event in Belfast	Association	April 13 – March 14	Support 6 conferences	£3,000
Distribute literature to 7,000 delegates	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	7,000	£1,000
Development of the new conference iPhone app and support conferences to encourage delegate spend and spread amongst members	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 conferences - Collate Belfast conference offers from members for the app 	N/A

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COMMS, MARKETING & PR				
AREA	MARKET SEGMENTS	DATE OF ACTIVITY	KEY OBJECTIVES TARGETS	ESTIMATED COSTS
Quarterly email campaign to BT database	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	Increase awareness and drive	£1,000
Advertising	GB association and Corporate	Jul 13 – March 14	Increase awareness of Belfast as a conference destination	£7,500
Development of the conference website	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase awareness of Belfast as a conference destination - Promote product and drive enquiries 	£1,000
Promotional and marketing materials	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	Promote Belfast as a leading conference destination	£3,000
Belfast Conference Guide 2014-2016 (Digital and printed versions)	Association and Corporate	Jan 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote Belfast as a leading conference destination - £30k advertising income 	£15,000 cost and (£30,000 income)
Industry membership and associated activity	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	Industry engagement, awareness and best practice	£12,700
Conference Taskforce	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	Engage BVCB members and partners to identify new conference opportunities for Belfast and take a collaborative approach to generate new business for the	N/A

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			city.	
Media relations	Association and Corporate Trade Press	April 13 – March 14	Increase media coverage within trade publications to increase awareness of Belfast as a conference destination	N/A
2 Trade engagement events	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	2 events	£3,000 trade events and engagement
4 Trade email updates per year	Association and Corporate	April 13 – March 14	4 trade updates	

MEMBERSHIP OPERATIONAL PLAN 2013/14	
AREA	TARGET
Membership fee Income	£175,000 (£10k)
Recruitment	80 new members
Membership marketing initiatives	£25,000 participation fee income
Non-renewing members (retention)	20 members / £5,000 revenue loss
Membership satisfaction	TBC

RECRUITMENT				
ACTIVITY	CATEGORIES	DATE OF ACTIVITY	KEY OBJECTIVES TARGETS	ESTIMATED COSTS
Recruitment campaign for new BVCB members: - Member research - Direct marketing and sales calls - Referral campaign (staff and existing members)	Priority categories are: Bars & restaurants Arts & entertainment Associate & corporate	April 13 – October 13	- Generate an additional £15,000 income and recruit approximately 80 new BVCB members in areas where market share could be increased: - Bars, restaurants, arts, entertainment and associate and corporate members.	£1,000
Production of BVCB member recruitment brochure and marketing materials	All	April 13	Launch April	£500
Development of a new marketing opportunities recruitment pack to promote (paid for) marketing platforms	All	April 13	Launch April	£1,500

RETENTION & SERVICING				
ACTIVITY	CATEGORIES	DATE OF ACTIVITY	KEY OBJECTIVES TARGETS	ESTIMATED COSTS
Membership servicing meetings	All	April 13- March 14	- Meet with 10 members per week - 440 meetings per year	£1,000
Retention campaign / non-renewals	All	April 13 – March 14	- Reduce non-renewals by 50% - Non-renewing member income losses should not exceed £5,000 / aprox 20 members - Proactive retention plan for 'at risk'	N/A

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> members - Outside of greater Belfast members should not exceed 20% of BVCB membership 	
Membership satisfaction	All	March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase membership satisfaction <p>NB: This will be measured against a member survey that will be issued to members in the new year</p>	N/A
Membership charter	All	TBC	Launch a new membership charter which outlines the commitment of both BVCB and its members	N/A

<p>Segment our BVCB membership base and implement a membership engagement plan for each new membership tier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Platinum members (1-45) £ x BVCB spend and above - Gold members (46-75) £x BVCB spend and above - Silver members (76 – 468) £x BVCB spend and above 	All	April 13- March 14	<p><u>Platinum members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMT representative assigned to each member - Half yearly review with SMT member - Multi-contact strategy in place within each member company – CEO / Sales Director / Manager etc - Annual CEO lunch - Annual membership report - VIP event invites - CEO comms and access to briefing materials and research - Free attendance at up to 14 free BVCB member events <p><u>Gold members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Half yearly reviews with membership manager - SMT support as appropriate - Annual membership report 	£1,000
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VIP event invites - CEO comms and access to briefing materials and research - Free attendance at up to 14 free BVCB member events <p><u>Silver members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual membership meeting - Free attendance at up to 14 free BVCB member events 	
Launch membership section of BVCB website and online resource hub	All	June 13	Enhance membership package by value added online resources and services – images, research, Belfast facts and figures, testimonials, member promotions, presentation tools, feedback etc	£2,000
<p>Launch new BVCB events programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social events - AGM - Business / leisure briefing breakfasts - Master-class series of educational events in partnership with BCC / Destination Belfast and key partners 	All	April 13 – March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 member master-class events (BCC/BVCB) - 1 x AGM (June 13) - 2 x Business Tourism events (April 13 & Jan 14) - 2 x Leisure / Digital events (TBC) - 2 x social events (May 13 & Dec 13) - Business planning consultation with members (TBC) - 9 x hosted table at key corporate events (Platinum and gold members only) - <i>IoD dinner</i> - <i>CIM awards</i> - <i>CBI dinner</i> - <i>Belfast business awards</i> - <i>Hospitality exchange</i> - <i>Janice awards</i> - <i>NI Travel & Leisure news</i> - <i>NITB tourism awards</i> - <i>NICC annual event</i> 	£5,000 (from membership budget)

Membership invoicing and renewals	All	April 13-March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly invoice instructions to be issued to finance - Outstanding payments (30+ days) to be chased weekly 	
Maintenance of the members directory, database and publications	All	April 13 – March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly member updates to be communicated to staff 'member champions' - Website and CRM amends to be updated weekly - Membership directory to be amended and updated bi-monthly within the About Belfast Guide - Membership information to be collated and updated annually within the Visitor Guide - Distribution list of the About Belfast guide to be maintained and updated on a bi-monthly basis - Annual visitor map to be updated membership updates 	
MEMBERSHIP MARKETING INITIATIVES				
Restaurant & food membership marketing initiative	Restaurant members	October 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generate £10,000 income through restaurant participation in Belfast Restaurant week 	£10,000 income
TIC member promotional exhibition	TBC	April- 13 – Dec 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generate £25,000 income through temporary promotional space in the welcome centre 	£25,000 income

MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATION / POLICIES AND PROCEDURES				
ACTIVITY	CATEGORIES	DATE OF ACTIVITY	KEY OBJECTIVES TARGETS	ESTIMATED COSTS
Implement a new membership CRM system	All	Sept 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define requirements for system - Issue tender - Implement new system – IT, staff training etc 	£7,000
Review finance process and the feasibility of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - direct debit membership renewals - debit/credit card payment option 	All	May 13 (To be undertaken in partnership with finance dept)	Objectives (subject to feasibility study) are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce membership renewal administration, increase efficiency and improve payment times and cash flow - Provide greater payment options for members and expedite payment times 	TBC
Review and amend membership terms and conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sanctions for breach of BVCB membership code of conduct - Visitor complaint policy - Member compliant policy and process 	All	April 13 (To be undertaken in partnership with SMT, legal advice and also Board approval would be required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that BVCB members maintain the highest standards of service and professionalism at all times and to enhance the reputation of Belfast as a tourist destination - Clarify standards and code of conduct for members - Implement sanctions for breaches of the code of conduct and processes for the cancellation of BVCB membership - Implement complaint policies internally to ensure issues are logged and dealt with efficiently and effectively 	N/A TBC

APPENDIX III: OPERATIONAL PLANS – LEISURE TOURISM

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CAMPAIGNS						
Product/ Geographic Market	Marketing Activity	Market Segments	Date of Activity	Key Objectives Targets	Estimated Costs	Monitoring Evaluation
NI - Spring / Summer	Above the line, more traditional platforms inc. Radio & Press to promote key experiences and products inc: Events, Festivals, Entertainment; Heritage and Attractions	Primarily Day Trips; Aligns with "Time Together," "Mature Cosmopolitans" and "Family Fun" segments	March-April July-August	<i>Encourage day and overnight visitors ; Drive footfall and spend to the city; Change perceptions; Promote contemporary and vibrant city; Promote best in class experiences</i>	£50,000	ROI £1:£8 £25,000 income from commercial partners
NI - Autumn/ Winter	Above the line, more traditional platforms inc TV, Radio & Press to promote key experiences and products inc: Retail; Events, Festivals, Entertainment and Nightlife; Heritage and Attractions	Primarily Day Trips; Aligns with "Time Together", "Mature Cosmopolitans" and "Family Fun" segments	October/ November-December	<i>Drive footfall and spend to the city; Encourage day and overnight visitors; Change perceptions; Promote contemporary and vibrant city; Promote best in class experiences, family fun</i>	£100,000	ROI £1:£8 £50,000 income from commercial partners Retail performance year-on-year year

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ROI - Spring / Summer	Digital, more innovative platforms inc. online advertising, social media, Video-on-Demand (VOD), targeted radio, to promote key experiences as per segment (Events, Festivals, Music; Nightlife; and key attractions)	City Breaks; Aligns with “Young and Lively” segment	March-April July-August	<i>Encourage day and overnight visitors ; Drive footfall and spend to the city; Change perceptions; Promote contemporary and vibrant city; Promote best in class experiences</i>	£50,000	ROI £1:£8 £25,000 income from commercial partners
ROI - Winter	Digital, more innovative platforms inc. online advertising, social media, VOD, targeted radio, to promote key experiences as per segments (Retail; Festivals, Music; Nightlife; and key attractions)	City Breaks; Aligns with “Young and Lively” segment	October/ November-December	<i>Encourage day and overnight visitors ; Drive footfall and spend to the city; Change perceptions; Promote contemporary and vibrant city; Promote best in class experiences</i>	£100,000	ROI £1:£8 £50,000 income from commercial partners Retail performance year-on-year year
GB – City Breaks	Co-op Carrier Campaigns delivered in partnership with Tourism Ireland and direct access carriers (e.g. Stena, flyBE, Aer Lingus, easyJet, British Airways)	Aligns with “Social Energisers” segment	TBC e.g. British Airways: May; Stena Line: June; flyBE: September; Aer Lingus: October easyJet: November	<i>Encourage city break visitors ; Drive overnights and spend to the city; Change perceptions; Promote contemporary and vibrant city; Promote best in class, hero experiences;</i> Raise profile of city	£354,000 + vat + £100,000 IN KIND	ROI £1:£15 Bookings & online activity £225,000 - Income from commercial

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				destination; Generate bed nights; and Support air & sea routes		partners + £100,000 IN KIND
NI, ROI, GB	Photography to support all campaign activity	As required	Various	Keeping visual communications fresh & updated, real-time	£10,000	Enhanced brand image linked to segments
Total Campaigns					£664,000	
<u>CAMPAIGN EVALUATION STUDIES</u>						
NI, ROI, GB	External Research	Post Campaign Activity	various times as per campaign activity	Measure campaign ROI & effectiveness	£50,000	Measurement of ROI & campaign ROI effectiveness
Total Campaign Evaluation Studies					£50,000	

KEY PRODUCT MARKETING SUPPORT						
<i>Belfast Restaurant Week</i>	<i>Radio/Press or Outdoor;</i>	<i>Primarily Day Trips;</i>	<i>Event Dates: 5 - 12 October 2013</i>	<i>To raise the profile of Belfast's tourism food experiences;</i>	<i>£25,000</i>	<i>Restaurant bookings;</i>
<i>NI/ ROI</i>	<i>gotobelfast.com/ visitbelfast.com; About Belfast editorial and event listing;</i>	<i>Aligns with "Time Together";</i>	<i>September-October</i>	<i>Use restaurant call to action to encourage day and overnight visitors ; Drive footfall and spend to the city;</i>		<i>Google analytics;</i>
	<i>social media;</i>	<i>"Mature Cosmopolitans";</i>		<i>Change perceptions;</i>		<i>PR value;</i>
	<i>PR</i>	<i>"Young and Lively" & "Mature Cosmopolitans" segments</i>		<i>Promote contemporary and vibrant city;</i>		<i>Media reach evaluation; Belfast Tourism Monitor</i>
	<i>Upweight NI platforms as extension to BCC domestic marketing activity</i>			<i>Promote best in class culinary experiences</i>		
<i>Belfast Music Week</i>	<i>Radio;</i>	<i>Aligns with "Young and Lively" and "Social Energisers" segments</i>	<i>Event Date: November 2013</i>	<i>To showcase and strengthen Belfast's 'City of Music' reputation;</i>	<i>£25,000</i>	<i>Event attendance across series of venues;</i>
<i>ROI/ GB</i>	<i>gotobelfast.com/ visitbelfast.com; About Belfast editorial and event listing;</i>		<i>October-November</i>	<i>position city as a primary destination for music and entertainment; Promote packages and experiences targeting day and</i>		<i>Google analytics;</i>
						<i>PR value;</i>
						<i>Media reach</i>

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	social media; digital advertising; ezines; PR events and activity			overnight visitors; Drive bednights and spend to the city; Change perceptions; Promote contemporary and vibrant city; Promote best in class experiences		evaluation; Belfast Tourism Monitor
Total for Key Product Marketing Support:					£50,000	
<u>PUBLICATIONS</u>						
Market	Marketing Activity	Market Segments	Date of Activity	Key Objectives Targets	Estimated Costs	Monitoring Evaluation
All	Belfast Visitor Guide	All	Nov 13	20,000 print with digital version Members profile Visitor servicing Create destination awareness	£20,000	20,000 distributed £10,000 income
NI – for all markets	About Belfast	All	5 editions per year	300,000 print & digital visitor servicing members profile	£150,000	300,000 distributed £50,000 ad income £60,000 income Maintain an average ABC rating

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						of 57,000 per edition
NI	Belfast TIC Map	All	13/14	130,000 print run A3 double sided tear off map for TIC use		N/A
NI	Belfast Visitor Map	All	13/14	15,000 print run Members grid reference & listing on reverse Visitor Servicing		N/A
Total Publications					£170,000	

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LEISURE TOURISM OPERATIONAL PLAN 2013/2014

<u>TRADE & EXHIBITIONS</u>						
Market	Marketing Activity	Market Segments	Date of Activity	Key Objectives Targets	Estimated Costs	KPI
Spain	Tourism Ireland SITC / Trade & Consumer Show (Barcelona)	Groups, FIT (Culturally Curious, Mature Cosmopolitans)	19–21 Apr 13	Destination / Product awareness & stimulating sales / bookings	£1,500*	12 Trade Leads
All	NITB: Meet the Buyers / B2B Workshop (Derry-Londonderry)	Groups, FIT (Culturally Curious, Mature Cosmopolitans, Young & Lively)	24-25 Apr 13	Priming Market & Stimulating sales / bookings	£800	20 Trade leads
USA	Tourism Ireland Destination Ireland Expo & Workshop (Kilkenny)	Groups, FIT (Culturally Curious, Mature Cosmopolitans)	May 13	Priming Market & Stimulating sales / bookings	£850	Present to 30 Agents
GB, Europe	City Fair , ETOA Workshop / B2B Workshop (London)	Groups, FIT (Culturally Curious, Family Fun, Mature Cosmopolitans)	24 Jun 13	Priming Market & Stimulating sales / bookings	£1,500	20 Trade leads

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NI	NITB GB Coach Operators Workshop / B2B Workshop (NI)	Groups (Culturally Curious, Family Fun, Mature Cosmopolitans)	Sept 13	B2B / destination sell	£700	10 Trade leads
Asia	Tourism Ireland Developing Markets Workshop / B2B Workshop (NI)	Groups (Culturally Curious)	Oct 13	Destination / Product awareness & stimulating sales / bookings	£500	15 Trade leads
All	Tourism Ireland World Travel Market (London)	All	4-7 Nov 13	Priming Market & Stimulating sales / bookings	£6,000	4 partners, £4k income 20 leads
Asia	Tourism Ireland Mission (China)	Groups (Culturally Curious)	Nov 13	Destination / Product awareness & stimulating sales / bookings	£4,500 (inc Country Club)	15 Trade leads
Netherlands	Tourism Ireland Vakantiebeurs (Utrecht)	Groups, FIT (Culturally Curious, Family Fun)	6-12 Jan 14	Priming Market & Stimulating sales / bookings	£1,500*	15 Trade Leads
NI	Holiday World (Belfast)	Consumer	Jan 14	Destination / Product awareness & stimulating sales / bookings	£3,500	4 partners / £1,000 income
ROI	Holiday World (Dublin)	Consumer	Jan 14	Destination / Product	£4,000	4 partners / £1,000 income

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				awareness & stimulating sales / bookings		
NI	NITB: Great Days Out for Groups (NI)	Social Groups (Culturally Curious, Family Fun, Mature Cosmopolitans)	Feb 14	Destination / Product awareness & stimulating sales	£400	15 Social Group leads
All	BIM ETOA Workshop / B2B Workshop (London)	Groups, FIT (Culturally Curious, Mature Cosmopolitans)	Mar 14	Priming Market & Stimulating sales / bookings	£1,000	20 Trade leads
GB	Best of Britain & Ireland (Birmingham)	Groups, FIT (Culturally Curious, Family Fun, Mature Cosmopolitans)	12-13 Mar 14	Priming Market & Stimulating sales / bookings	£2,500	£2,000 income 4 partners 15 leads
ROI	ITOA Workshop / B2B Workshop (Dublin)	Groups, FIT (Culturally Curious, Family Fun, Mature Cosmopolitans)	Mar 14	Priming Market & Stimulating sales / bookings	£1,000	10 Trade leads
Total Trade & Exhibitions					£30,250	187 Trade leads

LEISURE TOURISM OPERATIONAL PLAN 2013/2014

SALES CALLS

Market	Marketing Activity	Market Segments	Date of Activity	Key Objectives Targets	Estimated Costs	KPI
GB, Europe	Sales Calls (GB/ROI)	Groups, FIT	Autumn, Winter, Spring	Priming Market & Stimulating Sales	£3,000	Present to 30 Agents / Operators 30 Leads
Netherlands	Sales calls at Vakantiebeurs (Utrecht)	Groups, FIT / Curiously curious / Family Fun	6–12 Jan 14	Priming Market & Stimulating Sales	£500 *	10 Trade Leads
Spain	Sales Calls at SITC (Barcelona)	Groups, FIT / Curiously curious / mature cosmopolitans	21-25 Apr 13	Priming Market & Stimulating Sales	£500 *	5 Trade leads
Scotland	Sales Calls Celtic Connections Workshop (Glasgow)	Groups, FIT / Family Fun / mature cosmopolitans / Young & Lively	13-16 Jan 14	Priming Market & Stimulating Sales	£500 *	5 Trade Leads
GB	Sales Calls at Great Days Out for Groups	Social Groups, Curiously curious / Family Fun / mature	4-8 Feb 14	Destination / Product awareness & stimulating	£500	10 Trade Leads

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	(Manchester)	cosmopolitans		sales	*	
Total Sales Calls					£5,000	60 Trade Leads

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LEISURE TOURISM OPERATIONAL PLAN 2013/2014

<u>EXHIBITION SUPPORT</u>						
Market	Marketing Activity	Market Segments	Date of Activity	Key Objectives Targets	Estimated Costs	KPI
All	Stand Design	Groups	Ongoing	Destination / Product profile	£5,000	Support sales leads generation
All	Collateral	Groups	Ongoing	Destination / Product profile	£5,000	Support sales leads generation
Total Exhibition Support					£10,000	
<u>FAMILIARISATION VISITS</u>						
Market	Marketing Activity	Market Segments	Date of Activity	Key Objectives Targets	Estimated Costs	Monitoring Evaluation
All	Fam visit & support	All	Ongoing	Raise profile of destination/product	£5,000	10 Trade

Total Familiarisation Visits					£5,000	

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<u>CRUISE BELFAST PARTNERSHIP</u>						
Market	Marketing Activity	Market Segments	Date of Activity	Key Objectives Targets	Estimated Costs	Monitoring Evaluation
USA	Sales Calls	Cruise Operators: Miami and West Coast - B2B	Oct 13	Repeat & new cruise calls and confirm business and generate additional business	£5,000	Secure repeat visits by cruise lines, increase calls & secure new cruise calls
All	Seatrade Mediterranean, Hamburg (German sales calls)	Cruise Operators B2B	Oct 13	Attend show, destination sell Repeat trade calls & new cruise calls	£3,000	Secure repeat visits by cruise lines, increase calls & secure new cruise calls
USA	Tourism Ireland Jump into Ireland: San Diego/Santa Barbara	Groups, FIT – B2B	Oct 13	Destination/Product awareness & sales	£2,000	Promote to Travel Agents and Travel Media
All	Fam Trips	Cruise	Ongoing	Secure 1 cruise Fam trip	£3,000	Secure executive Fam trip
All	Membership	Cruise	Jan 14	Membership of Cruise Ireland	£1,500	
USA	Seatrade Exhibition Miami	Cruise Operators B2B	10-13 Mar 14	Raise profile of Belfast & NI as cruise destination	£5,000	58 cruise ships for 2013

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All	Advertising	Cruise Operators	Ongoing	Advertising in high end trade mags & websites e.g. cruise industry newspapers and magazines	£5,000	
All	Collateral	Cruise	Ongoing	Bespoke marketing materials to market Belfast & NI as a cruise destination	£5,000	
Total Cruise Belfast Partnership					£29,500	

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LEISURE TOURISM OPERATIONAL PLAN 2013/2014

COMMUNICATIONS & PR						
Market	Marketing Activity	Market Segments	Date of Activity	Key Objectives Targets	Estimated Costs	Monitoring Evaluation
NI, ROI, GB	Media briefings	<p>NI: Day Trips ; Time Together; Mature Cosmopolitan; Family Fun</p> <p>ROI: City Breaks; Young and Lively</p> <p>GB: Social Energizers; Culturally Curious</p>	<p>NI: Nov 13</p> <p>ROI: Spring 13</p> <p>GB: Glasgow May 13; London Sept/Oct 13</p>	<p>Changing perceptions of Belfast as a visitor destination;</p> <p>Informs and fill knowledge gaps / Introducing 'something new through media channels'</p> <p>Promoting music, food, festivals and Titanic</p> <p>Maintain and enhance media contacts in market</p> <p>Working in partnership with</p>	£12,000	<p>Contributing to £3m ad equiv.</p> <p>Contribute to the generation of 100 press enquiries annually</p>

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				travel trade and Tourism Ireland to generate positive coverage and interest		
GB, ROI, direct access markets	Host media fam visits (press, TV, online, bloggers) from key markets	<p>ROI: City Breaks; Young and Lively</p> <p>GB: Social Energizers; Culturally curious; business/conference</p> <p>Ad-hoc direct access as appropriate</p>	Throughout the year	<p>Raise the profile of Belfast as a city break & business destination</p> <p>Changing perceptions of Belfast as a visitor destination;</p> <p>Informs and fill knowledge gaps /introducing 'something new through media channels'</p> <p>Support the promotion of key tourism products: Titanic, Music, Festivals and Great Belfast Food</p>	£10,000	<p>30 press</p> <p>Secure coverage from all press fam participants</p> <p>Contributing to £3 ad equiv.</p>
NI, ROI, GB	<p>Press, Media and PR Activity to:</p> <p>- maintain and build BVCB's</p>	NI: daily and monthly	Throughout the year	Support wider BVCB activity;	£48,500	Minimum of 40 press releases / statements issued

	<p>corporate image to industry, stakeholders and wider NI public; maintain corporate profile of BVCB (and BWC) in local press; promote the value of tourism to local economy</p> <p>- Develop range of communications and PR activity to further build awareness of Belfast as a vibrant tourism destination in NI, ROI, GB and other markets</p>	<p>business and travel trade press; stakeholder communications</p> <p>ROI/GB: travel trade; conference and meetings press</p> <p>NI: Day Trips ; Time Together; Mature Cosmopolitans; Family Fun</p> <p>ROI: City Breaks; Young and Lively</p> <p>GB: Social Energizers; Culturally curious</p> <p>All other markets</p>		<p>raise profile of partnership and activity success – leisure, business and cruise tourism</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <p>Communication support to enhance the promotion of tourism experiences, products and key consumer messaging – providing relevant copy / info / imagery for e-zines, publications, and promotional material (on / offline)</p> <p>Develop a calendar of PR Campaign support activity that can more effectively engage in key segments, products and experiences</p> <p>Timely delivery of material (copy</p>	<p>(consumer facing & corporate)</p> <p>Contributing to £3 ad equiv.</p>
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				<p>/ images / offers/ competitions) that can be distributed to national / international media (print / media and online) via TI market offices and NITB Dublin that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform and fill knowledge gaps /introduce 'something new' / support the promotion of key tourism products: Titanic, Music, Festivals, Great Belfast Food and retail. 		
NI, ROI, GB	<p>Support services for communications, PR and marketing activity across all of BVCB (inc. BWC):</p> <p>Photography and related costs (props/event support)</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation (clippings)</p> <p>Contacts database development</p>	<p>Corporate</p> <p>NI: daily and monthly business and travel trade press; stakeholder communications</p> <p>ROI/GB: travel trade; conference and meetings press</p> <p>Consumer</p> <p>NI: Day Trips ; Time Together; Mature</p>	Year long	<p>To support the Communications and PR activity to enhance BVCB's profile locally / nationally and underpin Destination Marketing both on and offline.</p> <p>Photography for press/media/online attention (corporate and consumer) and ancillary activity to ensure press/media placement and maximise PR success - props, digitalisation, dressing, models,</p>	£28,000	Contributing to £3m ad equiv.

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		<p>Cosmopolitans; Family Fun</p> <p>ROI: City Breaks;</p> <p>Young and Lively</p> <p>GB: Social Energizers; Culturally curious</p> <p>All other markets</p>		<p>press tool kits</p> <p>Media monitoring service & evaluation to accurately evaluate PR/Comms activity</p> <p>Optimise press generation through development of press contacts database</p>		
All	Belfast / Visit-Belfast branded promotional items	Key stakeholders, corporate	All year	<p>Produce a range of Belfast 'B' branded promotional items (pin-badges etc) to encourage wider industry buy-in of the Belfast brand.</p> <p>Support roll out of new 'Visit-Belfast' identity name</p>	£5,000	
Total Corporate Marketing / Promotional Support					£103,500	

LEISURE TOURISM OPERATIONAL PLAN 2013/2014						
<u>SPONSORSHIP</u>						
Market	Marketing Activity	Market Segments	Date of Activity	Key Objectives Targets	Estimated Costs	Monitoring Evaluation
All	Private sector commercial sponsorship generation with Value Cabs (Diageo NI TBC)	Corporate, Stakeholder	All Year	Secure private sector sponsorship and deliver benefits of £100,000		As per agreement

WEB & DIGITAL						
Market	Marketing Activity	Market Segments	Date of Activity	Key Objectives Targets	Estimated Costs	Monitoring Evaluation
All	Website hosting & software support		Ongoing	Hosting, domains, software & maintenance	£6,000	
All	Digital Marketing (Social media, competitions, viral campaigns, videos, apps)	All day trips, Social energisers, Young and lively, Family Fun	Ongoing	Increase website traffic, promote a contemporary and vibrant city, increase social media fans.	£24,000	Website traffic – 800,000 unique visitors. App downloads. Social media fans.
All	Website development (Blog, competitions, itineraries, search engine optimisation)	All day and overnight segments	Ongoing	Increase website traffic, optimise user journey, promote a contemporary and vibrant city	£20,000	Website traffic - 800,000 unique visitors.
All	Email marketing (Corporate ezine – product update)	Members, press, tour operators, cruise industry	Monthly	Promote BVCB & member activity, promote tourism product	£10,000 (Contribution required from	Open rates - 25%. Click-through

BVCB Business Plan 2013-2014

					each department based on size of mailing list and design requirements.)	rates.
All	Email marketing (Consumer ezines)	All	Every two weeks and aligned with campaigns	Promote events and things to do in Belfast, and increase website traffic		Open rates - 25%. Click-through rates.
Greater Belfast	Email marketing (Front of house staff ezine)	Front of house staff	Weekly	Raise awareness of tourism products among front line staff in hotels etc so that they can advise visitors		Open rates - 25%. Click-through rates.
Greater Belfast	Email marketing (Business tourism ezines)	Members, ambassadors, trade and stakeholders	Quarterly and ad hoc	Promote member events and BVCB activity		Open rates - 25%. Click-through rates.
All	CRM database development (Competitions etc)	All	Ongoing	Capture detailed data on consumers from market segments, resulting in highly targeted marketing via email	£5,000	List building
Total Digital					£65,000	

**APPENDIX IV: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR
BELFAST WELCOME CENTRE RELOCATION****COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY (OPENING OF THE NEW WELCOME CENTRE)**

To support the opening of the new Welcome Centre at Donegall Square, BVCB (Visit Belfast) will deliver a sustained period of communications activity which will create awareness, drive interest and promote positive advocacy across all target audiences, ensuring that the facility is enthusiastically welcomed and utilized fully from its opening date.

Key Objectives

- To ensure that all relevant stakeholders, members, media and consumers (general public, visitors) are fully informed of the change.
- To underline the positive reasons for the change, rationale for the move, and to promote the benefits the new facility will bring.
- To promote and encourage target audiences to utilize and experience the new facility and to create positive advocates as a result.
- To secure wide-ranging support for the new facility and the benefits it will bring to the city.

Key Messages

- The new Welcome Centre is a state-of-the-art facility designed to meet Belfast's tourism requirements for the 21st Century.
- The new Welcome Centre has the capacity and facilities to more effectively handle the increasing numbers of tourists visiting the city.
- The facility is jointly-funded by key funders Belfast City Council and Northern Ireland Tourist Board
- The facility will be fully open and operating by Q4 2013
- The opening of the new facility underlines Belfast's tourism success and will underpin the economic benefits to the local and regional economy

Key Activities

1. BVCB (Visit Belfast) will deliver a proactive communications campaign in 2013, in consultation with our partners, which will incorporate all key messages and ensure objectives are fully met. Media Relations activity will be a core feature of this activity and will be focused on corporate and consumer audiences alike.
2. BVCB will plan and manage an official launch of the new facility in Q4 2013 which will provide a pivotal opportunity to reach target audiences, meet communications objectives and further underline stakeholder engagement activity.
3. BVCB will ensure that positive influential advocates are fully utilized to support the campaign, securing endorsement from well-known personalities from popular culture and business.

APPENDIX V: FINANCIAL APPENDICES

Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

PROFIT & LOSS FORECAST

	13 - 14 £
RESERVES FORWARD	
Reserves forward	168,000
TOTAL	<u>168,000</u>
BELFAST CITY COUNCIL	
Belfast City Council Main Funding	1,130,000
Belfast City Council - Whatabout	65,000
Belfast City Council - Domestic event marketing	103,000
TOTAL	<u>1,298,000</u>
OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES	
Other Local Authorities	60,000
TOTAL	<u>60,000</u>
NITB	
NITB SLA Funding	187,500
TOTAL	<u>187,500</u>
PRIVATE SECTOR	
Private Sector Marketing Support	100,000
UBBFQ Marketing Support	50,000
Private Sector Membership	175,000
Sponsorship revenue	100,000
Advertising - Whatabout	50,000
Advertising - Conference Guide	30,000
Advertising - Other	10,000
Conference booking fees	15,000
Corporate Ambassador Scheme	25,000
Commercial "pop up" opportunities	15,000
Membership Initiatives	10,000
Leisure Exhibition Participation	10,000
Business Exhibition Participation	34,750
Out of State Campaigns	225,000
Sundry income	500
TOTAL	<u>850,250</u>
TOTAL INCOME	2,563,750
MARKETING COSTS	
City Break Campaigns	
City Break Campaigns GB	356,000
City Break Campaigns ROI	150,000
City Break Campaigns NI	112,000
City Break Campaigns Belfast Events	50,000
Sub-Total	<u>668,000</u>
Leisure Marketing	
Collateral production	183,000
Exhibitions and Roadshows	35,250

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Cruise Marketing	29,500
Familiarisation visits	5,000
Belfast RTP Support for GBBCA TIC	7,000
Research	50,000
Sub-Total	<hr/> 309,750
Business Tourism and Membership	
Exhibitions and sales visits	124,500

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Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

PROFIT & LOSS FORECAST

	13 - 14
	£
Advertisements	7,500
Conference Guide	15,000
Ambassador Programme	35,000
Association and membership activity	12,700
Bid and promotional materials	30,000
Site Inspections and Fam Trips	20,000
Primary and secondary marketing	4,000
Booking commission and database maintenance	11,700
BVCB Membership	18,000
Sub-Total	<u>278,400</u>
Web and Digital	
Site Hosting and support	6,000
Site and app development	20,000
Web and digital marketing	34,000
CRM and Database	5,000
Sub-Total	<u>65,000</u>
Communications	
PR Activities	48,500
Industry Engagement	8,000
Press Fams	10,000
Media briefings and events	12,000
Photography, design and other PR expenses	33,000
Sub-Total	<u>111,500</u>
TOTAL	<u>1,432,650</u>
TOTAL NON OVERHEAD COSTS	1,432,650
NET INCOME BEFORE OVERHEADS	1,131,100
OVERHEADS	
Salaries (80% Marketing/20% Admin)	902,207
Management charges	(30,000)
Training	7,000
Travel and Subsistence	19,000
Cleaning	3,300
Health and Safety	500
Waste Disposal	2,000
Telephone	10,000
Printing and Stationery	9,000
Postage and Courier	10,000
Computer support & software	11,000
Office equipment maintenance	500
Miscellaneous expenses	2,550
Rent and service charges	71,520
Bad Debts	1,000
Rates	13,000
Insurances	6,000
Hire of rooms	1,500
Hire of equipment	500

Corporate meetings	1,500
Trade and Industry Events (ECM, etc.)	3,500
Repairs & refurbishment	4,000
Audit fees	3,500
Legal fees	1,500
Professional subs	1,400

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Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

PROFIT & LOSS FORECAST

	13 - 14
	£
Recruitment costs	9,000
HR & general consultancy	12,000
Project consultancy	24,000
Bank charges	750
Tender Costs	3,000
Depreciation	9,000
	<u>1,113,727</u>
OVERHEAD AS % OF INCOME	43.5%
ADMIN OVERHEAD AS % OF INCOME	15.3%
SALARIES AS % OF INCOME	34.0%
OPERATING SURPLUS OR (DEFICIT)	17,373
NET SURPLUS OR (DEFICIT)	<u>17,373</u>
CUMULATIVE	<u>17,373</u>

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Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

BALANCE SHEET FORECAST

	Opening £	Jun 13 £	Sep 13 £	Dec 13 £	Mar 14 £
FIXED ASSETS	12,215	10,487	9,784	7,836	6,133
CURRENT ASSETS					
Bank	5,828	381,864	58,049	393,406	91,266
Trade Debtors					
Invoiced Sales	239,415	165,876	171,127	171,126	181,428
Other Local Authorities	-	-	36,000	-	36,000
NITB SLA Funding	15,625	-	-	-	-
Private Sector Marketing Support	4,896	20,001	20,001	20,001	10,000
Sub-Total	259,936	185,877	227,128	191,127	227,428
Other Debtors	29,440	15,241	6,826	12,556	6,506
Prepayments	4,910	27,616	25,020	28,396	25,402
	300,114	610,598	317,023	625,485	350,602
CREDITORS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR					
Trade Creditors					
Invoiced Costs	273,965	274,671	274,672	271,289	266,899
Exhibitions and sales visits	6,863	12,033	12,033	12,033	24,066
Management charges	(30,000)	(7,500)	-	(15,000)	(30,000)
Rent and service charges	17,203	39,155	20,737	20,737	20,737
13/14 additions	-	-	2,320	-	-
Sub-Total	268,031	318,359	309,762	289,059	281,702
Other Creditors	22,280	33,738	33,738	33,738	33,738
Accruals	2,852	2,250	3,804	2,750	4,756
Pensions payable	11,788	11,788	11,788	11,788	11,788
	304,951	366,135	359,092	337,335	331,984
NET CURRENT ASSETS	(4,837)	244,463	(42,069)	288,150	18,618
CREDITORS DUE AFTER ONE YEAR	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL NET ASSETS	7,378	254,950	(32,285)	295,986	24,751
CAPITAL & RESERVES					
Retained Earnings	7,378	254,950	(32,285)	295,986	24,751
	7,378	254,950	(32,285)	295,986	24,751

Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

CASH FLOW FORECAST

	Apr 13 - - Jun 13 £	Jul 13 - - Sep 13 £	Oct 13 - - Dec 13 £	Jan 14 - - Mar 14 £	Total £
RECEIPTS					
Invoiced Sales	371,368	292,879	297,830	287,828	1,249,905
Belfast City Council Main Funding	565,000	-	565,000	-	1,130,000
Belfast City Council - Whatabout	-	-	65,000	-	65,000
Other Local Authorities	-	-	36,000	-	36,000
NITB SLA Funding	71,875	56,250	56,250	56,250	240,625
Private Sector Marketing Support	14,896	30,001	30,001	40,002	114,900
VAT	29,440	15,241	6,826	12,556	64,063
	<u>1,052,579</u>	<u>394,371</u>	<u>1,056,907</u>	<u>396,636</u>	<u>2,900,493</u>
PAYMENTS					
Invoiced Costs	423,324	424,030	427,413	428,421	1,703,188
Business Tourism and Membership	30,929	36,099	36,099	24,066	127,193
Salaries (80% Marketing/20% Admin)	124,338	124,338	124,337	124,338	497,351
Management charges	(22,500)	(7,500)	-	-	(30,000)
Rent and service charges	17,203	39,155	20,737	20,737	97,832
Rates	6,048	-	6,048	-	12,096
Insurances	6,380	850	3,382	-	10,612
13/14 additions	1,065	-	2,320	-	3,385
PAYE/NI	89,756	101,214	101,214	101,214	393,398
	<u>676,543</u>	<u>718,186</u>	<u>721,550</u>	<u>698,776</u>	<u>2,815,055</u>
NET CASH FLOW	<u>376,036</u>	<u>(323,815)</u>	<u>335,357</u>	<u>(302,140)</u>	<u>85,438</u>
OPENING BANK	5,828	381,864	58,049	393,406	5,828
CLOSING BANK	<u>381,864</u>	<u>58,049</u>	<u>393,406</u>	<u>91,266</u>	<u>91,266</u>



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast City Access Strategy
Date:	5 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	Claire Patterson, Business Research & Development Manager, ext 3379

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Complications caused by the first stage of 'Belfast On The Move' and the new bus lanes highlighted the sensitivity of Belfast's retail and leisure industries to transport disruptions. In the current economic climate it is particularly important that we reduce the risk of future negative impacts if the positive work in the Investment Programme is not to be undermined.
1.2	Therefore, to support the retail and leisure offerings in the city, we would like to commission a study and the subsequent development of a sustainable City Access Strategy and plan. This would be in partnership with key stakeholders and would enable the Council to fully understand the current and future needs of the city. It would also develop indicators that would enable us to monitor the situation and identify future actions to address the city's needs, in respect of accessibility, City Centre transport, parking and broader mobility.
1.3	The Belfast Metropolitan Area has a population of approximately 645,000 while almost 1.3 million people live within a 50 mile radius. Belfast City is the main centre of employment, administration and commerce for Northern Ireland providing almost 30% of total employment (this figure rises to 50% for the Belfast Metropolitan Area).
1.4	Research carried out in 1999 as part of the preparation of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan estimated the daily number of cars travelling into and out of Greater Belfast at 297,000 cars while the number of cars travelling into and out of Belfast's central core on a daily basis, was estimated at 149,007.

1.5	A survey carried out in November 2005 to establish the mode of transport used by people travelling into Belfast's inner cordon during the morning peak hour showed that 68 per cent of all cars were driver-only occupancy.
1.6	To facilitate the transport of these people each day, the city has a 703 mile classified roads network, 10 train stations (including two major hubs near the centre), two principal bus services Metro (BMA Commuter) and Ulsterbus (Inter Urban and Rural Services), and numerous taxi operators.
1.7	Following recent changes to the traffic network within the city centre there has been a perception that congestion has increased. The main aim of the Belfast On The Move project is to reorganise traffic management within Belfast City Centre to facilitate a reduction in general traffic levels and encourage greater walking, cycling and public transport use. The project should free up street space for public transport, walking and cycling and for those people who need to drive into the city centre for services, shopping, employment or leisure.
1.8	The Council Transport Policy advocates the provision of alternatives to private vehicle use that could be increasingly sustainable, efficient and comfortable. The Policy also acts as a means of promoting awareness of the need for more efficient use of private vehicles highlighting that good management of the demand for private transportation is essential.
1.9	It should also be noted that several studies/projects have already been completed (as referenced above) on the current situation and various metrics are available. Suitable reference should be made to these. Where practicable, this information will be made available to the successful consultant. Engagement with key stakeholders is also critical throughout this study.

2	Key Issues
2.1	To both minimise any negative impacts and identify any positive opportunities for Belfast's retail and leisure industries, as a result of better transport management, a sustainable City Access Strategy and plan should be developed. This should address the following objectives:
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure the accessibility offered by the transport system is available to all; – Improve safety and security; – Reduce air and noise pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption; – Improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the transportation of persons and goods; and – Contribute to enhancing the attractiveness and quality of the urban environment and urban design
2.3	In terms of content, a City Access Strategy should consider the factors in the following diagram. Getting the right balance between these factors will improve the quality of life of people living in the city whilst also contributing to the economic viability of the city.

2.4	
2.5	To develop a City Access Strategy and plan will require two main stages.
2.6	<p><u>Stage 1</u></p> <p>A baseline study to map the current situation and information sources. This will include identification of key stakeholders, existing transport & accessibility strategies and a review of current provision alongside any recent or planned interventions within the city. It is likely to include:</p>
2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identification of relevant existing information sources and their ownership/accessibility – Analysis of the current and future trends for transport demand and provision together with the physical characteristics of the city infrastructure. This will be captured using appropriate mapping representation. Aspects to consider include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Identification of the city’s key connection hubs and strategic centres, and the major transport corridors. – The current capacity of the existing transport network and infrastructure (road, parking, bus and rail, etc). A review and analysis of the current investment and service provision in these areas. – Parking availability, usage and location and the impact of subsidised or free public sector parking. – Mobility options and identification of the means of getting around the city, especially the city centre area. – Identifying gaps in relation to the current investment, service provision, legislative controls, policy positions and other arrangements in place. – Identification of appropriate benchmarking assessment of the city performance in terms of accessibility and mobility.

2.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging with key stakeholders and clearly identifying their concerns/issues and suggestions for solutions. In particular it should consider concerns over: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility and mobility; - congestions (both in terms of typical congestion levels and travel time variability); - the availability of parking (short and long term) including issues of pricing - and any potential implications for the different economic sectors within the city; and - exploration of the potential environmental and social impacts.
2.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of the nature and extent of the current challenges and including the identification of any underlying causes. - Review and analysis of best practice and case studies (both within Europe and internationally).
2.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial identification of potential actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - that are within the remit of the Council to pursue. - that key partners can implement utilising existing legislative and statutory frameworks. - that can only be addressed in the longer term with changes to these statutory frameworks, or with significant investment, or via policy shifts such as opportunities to further integrate land use and transit through a shared plan or strategy.
2.11	<p><u>Stage 2</u> On the basis of the information derived at stage 1, this stage should explore the potential options for improvements and develop a City Access plan for the city. It is likely to include:</p>
2.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploration of the more realistic opportunities to determine the implications for implementing them, taking account of the strategic, legislative and financial context. Opportunities may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving traffic operation, or better demand management (peak travel periods) to deliver predictable travel times, and reduce congestion on main roads. - Public transport fare prices. - Parking management and parking supply, allocation and pricing. Re-designating areas for parking. - Congestion charges. - Improving public transport. - Introducing Access Management (restrict vehicle access to certain zones), linked to a set of complementary measures such as those above. - Mobility Management and alternative transport arrangements such as Active Travel. - Modify the existing infrastructure. - Introducing new infrastructure.
2.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of the key policy levers to aid the introduction of ideas such as those listed above.

2.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of key performance indicators to be able to monitor and manage the issues and problems identified in Stage 1. - Further engagement of key stakeholders to discuss and refine potential solutions. <p><u>Optional follow on Stage</u> or additional commission: On the basis of the information derived at stages 1 and 2, Committee may consider a third stage to determine the most appropriate options to inform a longer term, comprehensive strategy.</p>
2.15	<p>This stage would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carrying out a full options appraisal including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an assessment of the positive and negative impacts; - monetary and non-monetary costs (initial investment and any ongoing costs); - benefits and risks for the various options; and - how they address the issues and problems highlighted in Stage 1. - Recommending the elements which could be introduced in the shorter term and those which should be incorporated within a long term strategy. - Proposals on how any associated costs could be funded.
2.16	<p>The work in all stages would need to be developed with input from key stakeholders such as the Department for Regional Development (DRD); Translink (Metro, NI Railways, and Ulsterbus); private operators and parking providers; port and airport operators; tourism providers; local businesses; enforcement agencies and the public. It should also be supported by reference to existing good practice and take account of existing mechanisms for the collection of data and monitoring of associated local impacts.</p>
2.17	<p>It is essential that the recommendations made are developed within the strategic context of city-wide regeneration and development plans. This includes the Belfast MasterPlan, the various travel plans, the Tourism Framework, the Investment Programme, etc.</p>
2.18	<p>In common with many other cities, Belfast has a range of transportation challenges. Any strategy to address them needs to achieve the right balance between the many competing demands for road space and public realm in the city centre. Accessibility is a key factor in maintaining effective growth of the city. Accommodating everyone's requirements and the competing demands requires an objective approach informed by a robust set of key indicators or data.</p>
2.19	<p>It is likely that some of the recommendations made may only be driven forward at the level of the NI Assembly. However, this should not constrain the recommendations being proposed especially if they will encourage people into the city and support our local businesses.</p>

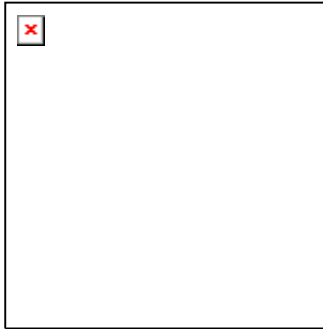
3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p>We estimate that the work outlined in the two stages could be delivered for approximately £30,000 from existing budgets. It is possible that there will be cost implications associated with implementing the subsequent strategy. Any recommendations in the strategy will be subject to a full cost/benefit analysis for committee consideration.</p>

3.2	There are some staff resource commitments in terms of managing the successful sub-contractor. These are estimated at approximately 15-20 staff days.
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4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no equality and good relations issues with regard to commissioning the work. However any recommendation for an access strategy will need to be screened and, if necessary, impact assessed particular with regard to disabled access into the city.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Committee are asked to approve a budget allocation of £30,000 from existing budgets to commission the work outlined in stages 1 & 2.

6	Decision Tracking
It is hoped that the recommendations will be brought to committee for consideration six months after approval to proceed.	



Report to: Development Committee

Subject: 2013-14 Events Programme

Date: 5 February 2013

Reporting Officer: John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

Contact Officer: Gerry Copeland, City Events Manager, ext 3412

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p><u>Purpose of the Report</u></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek approval from Members to deliver the Council's 2013-2014 programme of events. The overall budget for this programme was agreed at the Development Committee on the 15 January 2013. The total cost of the programme is £1,500,171. - There will be additional one off projects during 2013-2014 which will be financed from reserves. A budget of £400k has been set aside for the World Police & Fire Games and £225k for the All-Ireland Irish Dancing Championship. - Update Members on feedback to host the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association's (Northern Ireland Branch) 2013 Champion of Champions Pipe Band event.
1.2	<p>Over the last ten plus years the Council has delivered a series of high profile public events that are free to access by both citizens and visitors to the city. An update on the 2012-13 outputs will be presented on completion of the St. Patrick's Day Festival.</p> <p>The draft outline programme (for 2013-2014) is indicated in Appendix 1. The year round schedule, subject to Council approval, would run from Easter 2013 through to the Christmas Lights Switch-on in mid-November and finish with St Patrick's Day event in 2014.</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p><u>City Events Unit's Budget for 2013-2014</u></p> <p>The total overall budget of the annual events programme (approved by Council) is £1,500,171 plus a £400,000 contribution to the World Police and Fire Games (agreed by Council on the 18 September 2007) and a £225,000 fee for the staging and hosting of the 2013 All-Ireland Irish Dancing Championships (agreed by Committee on the 13 August 2008) from the Council's planned reserves for large-scale events. The budget would also cover the Council's Support for Sport Grant scheme, activities connected to the City Hall Big Screen and bidding and survey work on events.</p>

2.2	The programme includes fourteen events that run from the Belfast 400 programme during Easter 2013 through to the Council's St Patrick's Day activities in March 2014. In addition to the annual programme the Council has extensive input to the delivery and management of the World Police and Fire Opening and Closing events and the Games Village for the project. The overall events programme would be expected to attract over 200,000 people and bring significant economic activity to the city.
2.3	On the 16 October 2012 the Committee agreed to bid for the RSPBA Champion of Champions event in 2013. Unfortunately the Council was not successful in securing this event. However, discussions with the RSPBA have indicated that there is an opportunity to host another championship in 2014, 2015 and 2016. The annual cost to Council would be circa £140,000 and would include a £40,000 fee to the RSPBA. It is estimated 120 bands would attend this event and bring in additional economic activity to the city. However, this event has not been fully defined by RSPBA and Officers would suggest that a future report be brought back to Members on receipt of more information.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> The financial implications are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2013-2014 Events Programme - £1,500,171 (agreed by Council as part of the Department's estimates). - There will be additional one off projects during 2013-2014 which will be financed from specified reserves. A budget of £400k has been set aside for the World Police & Fire Games and £225k for the All-Ireland Irish Dancing Championship.
3.2	<u>Personnel</u> None at the current moment, but additional workloads may have issues on the City Events Unit to deliver in the coming year.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	As with all major civic events, public events like those listed have the potential to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and therefore promote good relations in the city.

5	Recommendations
	The Development Committee are requested to approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2013-2014 Events Programme. - That a future report is brought to Committee on a possible Piping event in 2014-2016.

6	Decision Tracking
	If approved, Officers will monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the project and provide post-project details as part of the Department's annual review. These outcomes will be presented to Members as part of the City Events Unit key performance indicators.
Timeline: March 2014	Reporting Officer: Gerry Copeland

7	Key to Abbreviations
	RSPBA – Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association

Appendix 1 - Draft 2013/14 Events Programme subject to Committee approval

	Event	Venue	Proposed Date(s)
1.	Belfast 400	Belfast City Hall	Saturday 30 March- Tuesday 2 April
2.	Belfast City Marathon	Citywide	Monday 6 May
3.	Lord Mayors Concert	City Hall	Saturday 18 May
4.	Belfast Titanic Maritime Festival	Queens Quay Titanic Slipways	Saturday 25 - Monday 27 May
5.	World Police and Fire Games – Opening Ceremony	Titanic Quarter	Thursday 1 August 2013
6.	World Police and Fire Games – Athlete Village	Custom House Square	1-10 August 2013
7.	World Police and Fire Games – Closing Ceremony	Titanic Slipways	Saturday 10 August 2013
8.	Autumn Fair	Botanic Gardens	Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 Sept
9.	Belfast City Half Marathon	Citywide	Sunday 22 September
10.	Halloween	TBC	Sat 26 or Sun 27 Oct
11.	All Ireland Irish Dancing Championships	Belfast Waterfront	23 October – 1 November
12.	Christmas Lights Switch-On	City Hall	Saturday 16 November
13.	St Patrick's Day	City Centre and Custom House Square	Monday 17 March 2014

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	World Host Training: World Police and Fire Games (WPFG)
Date:	5 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager ext 3225

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Committee previously considered and agreed the Service proposal and outline plan with respect to the development of a Volunteer Framework. This proposal, which was agreed by committee and ratified by council last year, primarily sets out to refine and improve upon current practice within the Community Services section of council with respect to volunteer recruitment and selection, subsequent support, training, retention and importantly recognition and celebration.
1.2	The plan is the next stage of an ongoing programme which was initiated by an evaluation of the value of volunteer support for both council and for participating volunteers and by a health-check exercise which heavily influenced the plan identifying those areas of practice which are working well and areas where the service could improve practice and procedure. Furthermore, the plan includes initial support to other sections of Council primarily our own Events team and developing practice in Parks and Leisure services. This work is ongoing and, pending available resources, the project plan will allow us to develop a framework and timetable for council to move towards the Investors in Volunteers quality award.
1.3	The service heavily relies on the support of volunteers to both extend the range and reach of our programme to users and residents and this is the subject of annual targets which are reported on via the CORVU system.
1.4	As part of the Investment Programme, council has committed to further consider how to development methodologies whereby volunteer endeavour might be formally recognised in order to influence positive pathways to employment. We believe the proposal outlined below offers an important opportunity to contribute to this target while also offering a motivated and trained pool of volunteers in support of future council events.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Volunteer Now is managing the volunteer recruitment for the World Police and Fire Games in Belfast 2013. Volunteer Now has been an increasingly important partner in our project plan within the service over the past 2 years and we have an excellent working relationship with this, the regional volunteer support agency.</p>
2.2	<p>It is anticipated that 3,600 volunteers will be required to support the WPFG event over the period of the Games. Approximately 1,600 of these will be Games Ambassadors which will be the largest volunteer role within the Games. 21% of games applicants were from Belfast City Council area and while allocation roles are not yet complete, it is anticipated that 21% of Games Ambassador volunteers may also come from Belfast leaving a legacy of over 330 trained volunteers who may be able to support future events.</p>
2.3	<p>Games Ambassadors will support the delivery of the friendliest Games by being the “Face” of the games. They will have the opportunity to meet, greet and inform athletes and visitors at various visitor arrival points (including airports and train stations), games venues and VIP stations.</p> <p>The main tasks of the ambassadors will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting and Greeting (for example athletes, families, VIPs, media, sponsors) - Signpost/orientate visitors - Man information stands - Mingle with visitors and assist in providing an excellent and informed event experience. - Support everyone in ensuring a safe and clean event environment
2.4	<p><u>World Host Training</u></p> <p>In order to support this role Volunteer Now propose to deliver World Host Training as the most suitable training programme which would meet the needs of volunteers in their role and would give volunteers something tangible as a result of taking part.</p> <p>World Host Training Services has been delivering world renowned customer service training since 1985, when the Super host programme was introduced to prepare British Colombians to host the world EXPO 86. In the UK, people 1st, the sector skills council for hospitality, passenger transport, travel and tourism industries is delivering World Host programmes, which formed a key part of volunteer training for London 2012. In Northern Ireland this is supported by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.</p>
2.5	<p><u>Training Outline:</u></p> <p>Volunteer Now plan to deliver 3 programmes as part of World Host: Principles of Customer Service, Ambassador Workshop and Train the Trainers.</p>
2.6	<p>1. Principles of Customer Service</p> <p>Volunteer Now intend that 200 team leaders will participate in the Principles of Customer Service training and then attend the Ambassador programme with their teams.</p>

	Participants will gain invaluable skills and techniques that form the fundamentals of service professionalism. They will be encouraged to take pride in what they do and the area of Northern Ireland in which they live and work. This will also prepare the team leaders for their particular role in their facilitation at the ambassador session with their teams.																		
2.7	<p><u>Course content:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcoming people skills - What forms a good impression - Why should I handle customer concerns - The communications process - Effective listening - Visitor needs - The value of tourism - Personalised key commitments - Topics to avoid. 																		
2.8	<p>2. Ambassador Workshop</p> <p>This training would be delivered to groups of 50-100 to approximately 1600 games ambassadors including team leaders. This half day workshop supports ambassadors and volunteers in providing a warm and friendly welcome. It equips participants with resources to interact and assist visitors to Northern Ireland and provides an opportunity to build on delegates existing skills as representatives of Northern Ireland to our visitors.</p>																		
2.9	<p><u>Course Content:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrating a warm welcome - Local tourism resources - Ambassador resources - The pride factor - Lasting impressions. 																		
2.10	<p>3. Train the Trainers</p> <p>It is proposed to train six trainers in a 4 day train the Facilitator programme which would be fully tailored to enable them to deliver events across Northern Ireland in all sectors and in both team leader roles and to large groups.</p>																		
2.11	<p>Timescale for Delivery</p> <p>Volunteer Now have planned to deliver the training between April – June 2013</p>																		
2.12	<p>Lasting Legacy for Future Events</p> <p>A database of 1500-2000 trained and experienced volunteers will be created. Volunteer Now has agreed that they will work in partnership to promote BCC volunteering opportunities.</p>																		
2.13	<p>World Host Costing</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Volunteers to have Principles of Customer Service as team leaders</td> <td style="text-align: right;">200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cost per volunteer for handouts, certificate and pin</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£21.54</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">£4,308.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Volunteers to have Ambassadors training</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1600</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cost per volunteer for handouts, certificate and pin</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£12.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">£19,200.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of staff to do training the trainers</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cost per staff member</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,020.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">£6,120.00</td> </tr> </table>	Volunteers to have Principles of Customer Service as team leaders	200	Cost per volunteer for handouts, certificate and pin	£21.54		£4,308.00	Volunteers to have Ambassadors training	1600	Cost per volunteer for handouts, certificate and pin	£12.00		£19,200.00	Number of staff to do training the trainers	6	Cost per staff member	£1,020.00		£6,120.00
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	£6,120.00																		

	Total cost	£29,628.00
2.14	Volunteer Now are asking BCC to consider a pro rata contribution to the cost of the training i.e. 21% or £6,221.88.	
2.15	Volunteer Now are also seeking financial support from Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to support this proposal. At present they have no funding committed however organisations have expressed an interest in supporting this undertaking.	
2.16	Volunteer Now has secured funding from World Police and Fire Games to deliver volunteer training for the Games but this does not include the cost of World Host certification. The costing in this proposal is therefore additional to the initial costs in the World Police and Fire Games budget.	
2.17	If all funding is not secured to deliver the entire programme Volunteer Now are committed to delivering the first tranche of training to the 330 Belfast based ambassadors with the resources awarded by BCC a contract will be developed with Volunteer Now to reflect this agreement.	

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The proportionate cost for Belfast of £6,222 in within the service 2012/13 revenue budget for volunteer support.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	The availability of the training will be offered to all Belfast ambassadors registered for the World Police and Fire Games.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Discuss the proposal, noting any issues or areas for added value. ii. Pending above, agree the funding support requested by Volunteer Now to support the roll out of World Host Training.

6	Decision Tracking
Catherine Taggart to implement committee decision by March 2013.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
WPFG World Police and Fire Games	



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Consultation: DSD Maximising Incomes and Outcomes – A Plan For Improving The Uptake Of Benefits
Date:	5 February 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	Claire Patterson, Business Research & Development Manager, ext 3379

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Council has been asked to respond to the Social Development Minister's three year plan to improve the uptake of benefits. This plan sets a target of generating over £30million in additional social security benefits for at least 10,000 people across the region by 2016. Views are sought on four key areas:
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – access and delivery of benefits; – better targeting of those with potential to claim more benefits; – responding to the needs of people at key life changes; and – strengthening partnerships and encouraging innovation in order to improve the uptake of benefits.
1.3	<p>The specific questions for the consultation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do you believe that the Department should continue to invest in proactive approaches to encouraging benefit uptake? – Do you [believe] that people in all circumstance (in and out of work) are in scope for improved awareness and information with higher investment and priority being given to those groups identified as needing more direct intervention in order to take up benefits they are entitled to? – Do you agree that referral to a wider range of services and supports should be a key part of benefit uptake programmes? – Do you agree with the vision and aims of the strategy? – Do you believe that the 6 strategic priorities are right? Are there others that you would have expected to see? – Do you agree that the main barriers to benefit uptake are listed?

	<p>Are there other factors that may have a bearing on decisions about having an entitlement check or making a claim?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In addition to those better targeting commitments set out are there others that you believe should be considered by the Department? – In addition to those access and delivery commitments set out are there other improvements that you believe should be explored by the Department? – What additional steps do you believe the Department could take to ensure that, at critical points of change in people’s lives, they are aware of their entitlements to benefits, services and supports? – How do you believe the Department could improve uptake of benefits through enhanced partnerships working with community level organisations? – How do you believe the Department could improve uptake of benefits through innovation? – Are there additional targets that you would like to propose? – Any further comments, recommendations or suggestions you would like to make in relation to this plan. <p>1.4 The Full proposal is attached in Appendix 1 and is also available online: http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/consultations/consultations-maximising-incomes-and-outcomes.htm</p> <p>1.5 We were made aware of the consultation on 2 January 2013 and comments are required to be returned by the 26 February 2013.</p> <p>1.6 The consultations document was distributed to Officers across Council and their responses have been included in the provisional draft response attached as Appendix 2.</p>
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2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Most of the proposals seem sensible and in line with Council’s current initiatives in the area of benefit awareness (particularly our work with older people and through our advice services).</p>
2.2	<p>However there are some aspects of the draft proposal that could be improved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There needs to be a balance between targeting efforts at the most vulnerable while still meeting the needs of all people who are entitled to benefits. We are not currently clear as to where the emphasis will be but there may need to be more on careers and those in care. – Some of the barriers to accessing benefits are not explicit in the document. For example there is no reference to barriers caused by frailty; physical difficulties and feeling of vulnerability; the impact of medical conditions such as depression; and low literacy levels. – There could be more emphasis and awareness of opportunities for working in partnership with other agencies. – There is a realisation that the department needs to be innovative in finding solutions to the problem of people not claiming benefits. However there needs to be some caution so that the system is not made more complicated, which is a major barrier in its own right. – There should be more emphasis on converting awareness about benefits to the actual take up of benefits.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There should be some recognition of the potential impact of the recession in terms of putting further strain on the system.
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3	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no resource implications attached to this report.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations implications attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to approve the draft BCC response to the consultation and raise any additional issues, relating to the consultation document, that they would like to be included.

6	Decision Tracking
Timeline: 26 February 2013	Reporting Officer: David Purchase

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 "Maximising Incomes and Outcomes - A Plan For Improving The Uptake Of Benefits." DSD. December 2012.	
Appendix 2 "Consultation: Draft Response DSD Increasing The Uptake Of Benefits."	

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Maximising Incomes and Outcomes

- A Plan For Improving The Uptake Of Benefits



Discussion Document
December 2012



An Agency within the Department for
**Social
Development**

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Foreword

Minister for Social Development, Nelson McCausland

I am pleased to bring forward my Department's draft 3 year plan for improving the uptake of benefits in Northern Ireland.

As Minister for Social Development I have ensured that the role of social welfare and the uptake of benefits by vulnerable groups are to the fore in my Department's policies aimed at tackling poverty and disadvantage and achieving a positive impact on the Northern Ireland economy. One of my first actions in office in the summer of 2011 was to allocate additional funding to the Social Security Agency's Benefit Uptake Programme of work. I am pleased that this additional investment has delivered results, more than trebling the amount of additional annual income generated for people from the previous year's efforts, with £13.1m shared between just over 4,000 people, most aged 60 and over.



I want to continue this work and to make an even greater difference to people's lives.

There is no doubt that the challenges presented by the current economic context are significant and these pressures are being felt in people's homes across Northern Ireland. This is evident; not only from the statistics, but from the many face to face conversations I've had with people as I travel across Northern Ireland on a weekly basis.

Rising costs, fuel prices in particular, alongside steadily increasing food bills, means that there has never been a more important time for us to ensure that all efforts are made to optimise household incomes through take up of benefits for those most at risk of poverty at stages in their lives when they most need that financial support.

The continuing welfare reform agenda aims to reshape the entitlement framework and whilst I am confident that this will offer opportunities to many by making sure that work pays; I also believe that the time is right to ensure that our vision of full uptake of benefits along with other services and supports by those for whom work is not an option is realised.

My Department cannot realise this vision by acting alone. It requires co-operation and collaborative effort across government and from all those with an interest in economic growth and social welfare across Northern Ireland. I therefore encourage you to share your ideas and views with us and to contribute to the development of a plan that will make a significant improvement in people's lives.

I would like to hear the views, not only of those that we fund and work with on a daily basis, but also those groups who interact, for reasons other than benefit advice, with people that we need to reach who are vulnerable to and experiencing poverty. We have been working to develop such partnerships for the purposes of improving benefit uptake in the last twelve months. We intend, in the context of this strategy, to strengthen our efforts in that regard.

I have arranged for a series of informal public engagement meetings to ensure that we provide local and community level opportunities for your views on improving benefit uptake to be expressed and heard. I can assure you that these will inform this plan and the development of a longer-term strategy for improving benefit uptake.

Following the consultation period I will bring forward a final plan by the end of March 2013. I look forward to hearing from you.

Nelson McCausland

Nelson McCausland
Minister for Social Development
December 2012

2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 Policy Context

Priority 2 of the 2011-2015 Programme for Government¹ “Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Wellbeing” outlines the Northern Ireland Executive’s commitment to delivering a range of measures to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

Through the office of the First and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), working with all other departments, the Executive is committed to addressing poverty, through a suite of inter-related programmes in the context of the long term Delivering Social Change Framework.

Social security benefits provide a critically important safety net for the vulnerable and those in most need. For the year ended March 2012 expenditure on social security benefits was more than £4.4 billion².

The Department is committed as one of its actions to address poverty, to contacting 25,000 existing social security benefit customers in each year of the Programme for Government, to offer a full and confidential benefit entitlement check.

Building on that commitment, this document, Maximising Incomes and Outcomes, a Plan for Improving the Uptake of Benefits, sets out a further important Executive commitment, under Priority 2 of the Programme for Government, to improve the uptake of benefits available to people who need them most across Northern Ireland.

The root causes of poverty are complex and multifaceted and the Department, alongside other Executive partners, plays an important role in delivering a range of social policies to address these.

¹ Programme for Government 2011-15 <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/pfg-2011-2015-final-report.pdf>

² Social Security Agency Annual Report 2011-12 <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/ssa-annual-report-2010-11.pdf>

The Department's contribution to achieving positive impacts on poverty levels is to provide fit and affordable housing and combat fuel poverty, to regenerate deprived areas, deliver effective child maintenance arrangements and transform the welfare system.

It is not suggested; therefore, that improved or even full uptake of benefits will eradicate poverty. For most individuals and families of working age, improving their income, mitigating the risk of poverty and improving life opportunities will always be through work, not out of work benefits. In that context, the Executive seeks, through the Economic Strategy and the Welfare Reform agenda, to reduce benefit dependency, one of the root causes of poverty, and to increase participation in the labour market.

The plan will lead to the development of a longer-term strategy for improving the uptake of benefits, given the ongoing work to improve the evidence base, with a formal update being published when key phases of that work are complete. Close co-operation across government and with a range of community partners is required in order to successfully deliver the plan. Proposals have been developed in the context of clear linkages to related Executive policies and strategies within the Delivering Social Change agenda, including the Department's Housing and Warm Homes strategies, Reform of Adult Care and Support and the emerging Disability and Ageing strategies.

Discussion Point:

1. Do you believe that the Department should continue to invest in proactive approaches to encouraging benefit uptake?

2.2 Scope

People in all circumstances will be within the scope of benefit uptake programmes of support. Some groups; where evidence to date has indicated there is a higher risk of poverty, a greater need for support, or that they are less likely to take up benefits; are identified and prioritised for direct intervention, through targeted programmes. These include older people, those with care needs and those with caring responsibilities.

Full benefit entitlement checks delivered by the Social Security Agency and its contracted partners not only assess entitlement to social security benefits but also to a wide range of additional benefits, services and supports. Examples include rates reliefs, and concessionary fares, Blue Badge Scheme, the Boiler Replacement and Warm Homes Schemes, free dental and optical treatment. It is therefore anticipated that the successful delivery of this plan may result in a consequential increase in uptake of linked benefits, services and supports aimed at households on low incomes or experiencing health problems. The potential exists for additional positive impacts relating to social inclusion, health and wellbeing in a wider sense.

Discussion Points:

2. Do you agree that people in all circumstances (in and out of work) are in scope for improved awareness and information with higher investment and priority being given to those groups identified as needing more direct intervention in order to take up benefits they are entitled to?
3. Do you agree that referral to a wider range of services and supports should be a key part of benefit uptake programmes?

2.3 Vision and Aims

The vision of Maximising Incomes and Outcomes, a Plan for Improving the Uptake of Benefits in Northern Ireland is:

“That every individual and household across Northern Ireland is receiving all social security benefits to which they and their families are entitled and are aware of other relevant government services and supports.”

The plan aims to ensure that, within the framework of entitlements that exist at any given point, all those with potential entitlement:

- ***are aware of the full range of benefits which exist to support them;***
- ***have access to the right information to make an informed choice; and***
- ***can make a claim easily (with support, where required).***

Discussion Point:

4. Do you agree with the vision and aims of the strategy?

2.4 Key Principles Underpinning the Delivery of the Strategy

The key principles underpinning this plan and actions arising from it are:

- **dignity:** people will be made aware of and given access to the benefits to which they are entitled, in a way which promotes their rights and respects their dignity;
- **privacy:** people will be able to access and claim benefits in confidence with their right to privacy respected;
- **fairness and equity:** people will have equal access to information, access channels and support with all staff and partners involved committed to positive action to address inequalities;
- **outcome focused:** investment in benefit uptake approaches will be made in a context where we seek to maximise overall outcomes for people and also to ensure that value for money continues to be achieved i.e. more is generated for people than the amount required to generate it;
- **flexible and adaptable:** the development of annual programmes of work will ensure that the plan is flexible to adapt and respond to changing economic and social welfare circumstances, emerging evidence and related executive priorities and strategies; and
- **working together:** it is accepted that government and community partners must work together to deliver the outcomes anticipated.

2.5 Equality Screening

Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 requires all public bodies in carrying out their functions relating to NI to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to the above, public bodies must also in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland have regard to the desirability to promote good relations between persons of a different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

A Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the approach set out in this strategy. Due to the policy intent, which is to alleviate and positively impact income inequalities and positively impact poverty levels, no adverse differential impacts on any Section 75 groups have been identified.

2.6 Pre-Consultation to Inform Development

A pre-consultation exercise was conducted to help inform the development of these proposals. It involved a series of one-to-one meetings with key third sector organisations with a direct interest in this area. Most of these have been involved in helping the Department develop and improve benefit uptake approaches since work began in 2005.

The information and written submissions received have been useful in the development of these proposals. The Department was encouraged that all those consulted expressed clear views that the current range of approaches are making a difference and should continue, with a range of suggestions for development.

3.0 Background to the Benefit Uptake Programme

Although it is not a statutory obligation, the Department for Social Development has, in addition to its ongoing promotion of benefits through the provision of information, prioritised and allocated significant resource to the development of specific programmes for encouraging benefit uptake from 2005.

Since then, more than £4.4 million has been invested in a range of evidence based approaches which have generated additional annual benefits and arrears of over £50 million for more than 15,000 people. In that time there has been a steady increase in uptake of means tested benefits by older people and a reduction in pensioner poverty levels on current relative and absolute measures.

Those groups identified from available research evidence as being most vulnerable to poverty and likely to have unclaimed entitlement have been targeted. Groups directly targeted have included older people (identified as being particularly vulnerable in all research), people living with disability or illness, carers and families.

The investment in benefit uptake activities supplements and adds value to the Agency's "business as usual" awareness raising and provision of information. This includes the provision of a wide range of benefit specific publications; clear citizen friendly information on the NI Direct website; an online Benefit Advisor service through which people can carry out their own entitlement checks; and general assistance with advice and information, including full benefit entitlement checks delivered face to face through the network of local offices across Northern Ireland.

The Department funds the independent advice sector to deliver a range of benefit information services; including benefit advice, advocacy and appeal representation to people across Northern Ireland. Annual funding allocated to this work in 2011/12 was around £3 million.

The Department has sought to ensure that linkages are made internally and with other government departments and agencies to maximise outcomes, particularly for pensioners and families.

Benefit entitlement checks are a key element of the Prevention theme of the Fuel Poverty Strategy and as part of the pilot Area Based Approach to Fuel Poverty, all households in high risk areas are offered a full benefit entitlement check. Claims to Housing Benefit and for Rates Relief are built into the process for claiming State Pension Credit and the Social Security Agency works closely with Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Land and Property Services to ensure resources are optimised and to avoid duplication in relation to direct targeting, promotion and outreach activity.

The Department considers it a measure of the ongoing development and success of benefit uptake approaches that outcomes from the 2011/12 Benefit Uptake Programme were very positive. The number of people benefiting went from 1,300 in 2010/11 to 4,029 in 2011/12. The amount of additional benefit and arrears generated for people went from £3.95m in 2010/11 to £13.1m. The average weekly additional amount rose from £48 to £60. In addition, the value for money of the programme was improved. It remains clear however, that returns of just fewer than 6% of those directly targeted being converted into a successful claim could be improved with access to better income data for direct targeting purposes.

The 2012/13 Benefit Uptake Programme is currently at mid-stage. It seeks to build on the success of that achieved in 2011/12 with the continuation of direct targeting (29,000 people for State Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance), “Make the Call” television, press and outdoor advertising, community outreach, the evaluation of the Innovation Fund and the development of existing and new partnerships across government and in the community.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office (February 2011) and the Public Accounts Committee (February 2012) acknowledged that the investment is making a difference for many pensioners and that value for money is being achieved.

Outcomes of previous programmes are outlined at Appendix 1.

Building on this success, the Department believes that further opportunities exist to achieve more, for example; through better use of technology, more effective cross government working and by strengthening existing and building new community based partnerships.

4.0 Strategic Priorities

Six main priorities have emerged from the evidence and pre-consultation stage. The Department believes that prioritising action in these broad areas will improve the uptake of benefits over the lifetime of this Plan. A series of linked commitments and high level targets are proposed for discussion.

- 1. Improving the evidence base**
- 2. Better targeting**
- 3. Improving access and delivery**
- 4. Responding at key life changes**
- 5. Strengthening partnerships**
- 6. Encouraging innovation**

Discussion Point:

5. Do you believe that the 6 strategic priorities are right? Are there others that you would have expected to see?

4.1 Strategic Priority 1: Improving the evidence base

The current evidence base

The Department has acknowledged that, due to the limitations of the Family Resource Survey (FRS) data, the evidence base in relation to the size and scale of unclaimed benefit entitlement is limited. However, the outcomes achieved annually for people are convincing in relation to the value of intervention.

The Department has taken steps to target its efforts where independent research evidence suggests that uptake issues exist. It funded an independent review of benefit uptake activities in 2008 and has designed annual programmes since then around the evidence produced. (See 2.2 Scope)

Poverty in Northern Ireland

Investment in benefit uptake programmes is directly linked to the Department's tackling poverty priorities. On current measures³, Northern Ireland's relative position in terms of income poverty has improved in the last year. This was more marked for some population groups than others with the largest improvement being seen in relation to children. The overall long term trend (**Appendix 2**) has remained fairly static, with approximately one in five people in poverty in any given year. This currently equates to 93,000 children and 63,000 pensioners.

Addressing child poverty in particular is fundamental to breaking the cycle of deprivation that characterises our most disadvantaged individuals and families. It is a priority area for action within the Executive's Delivering Social Change agenda.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is currently responsible for the delivery of child benefit, child and working tax credits. With the planned introduction of Universal Credit in 2014 the Department, through the Social Security Agency, will be responsible for all tax credits. It is anticipated that Universal Credit will have a positive impact on child poverty and on uptake of benefits, with up to 46,000 households potentially taking up new or more benefits.

³ New measures are currently being explored. Department of Education / Department for Work and Pensions consultation will begin in February 2013.

The proportion of pensioners in relative poverty (Before Housing Costs (BHC)) has decreased from a series high of 30% in 2008/09 to a series low of 22% in 2010/11. The proportion of pensioners in absolute poverty has decreased from 20% to 13% over the same period. This equates to 37,000 pensioners in absolute poverty in 2010/11 (BHC).

Population Growth

People are living longer. The 2011 census data indicates that compared to 2001, the population aged 16 to 64 has increased by 103,900 (10%). However, the population aged 65 and over has increased by 40,400 (18%). Within this group, the numbers of the most elderly have seen the greatest proportionate increase over the last decade. In 2001 there were 23,300 people aged 85 or more, this has increased to 31,400 – an increase of 35% over the decade. As the population of older people continues to rise, so also will the needs that they have.

Uptake of key benefits in Northern Ireland

Around 23% of working age people in Northern Ireland claim a key benefit compared to 16% in Great Britain. Uptake of all key benefits, per head of population is higher in Northern Ireland. (**Appendix 3**)

Summary

Uptake of key benefits is higher in Northern Ireland. Whilst delivery of the welfare reform agenda will provide opportunities for improved incomes for working age individuals and families, pensioners are much less likely to be able to improve their income levels through participation in the labour market. Therefore uptake of benefits can have a more significant impact on pensioner poverty levels.

Barriers to Uptake of Benefits

A range of evidence exists to suggest why people do not claim benefits to which they may be entitled. Many people, even when contacted directly, make conscious decisions not to take up the offer of a free and confidential entitlement check.

The main barriers (both perceived and real) to benefit uptake can be summarised as follows:

- belief that the potential claimant is ***not eligible***;
- fear of ***complexity***; form filling and evidence requirements;
- lack of ***awareness*** of particular benefits;
- concern about how the receipt of some benefits could ***impact on other benefits received***;
- ***pride and values***: desire to remain independent, feel that they have sufficient income to live on, are “better off” than others who may need it more, do not need or want state support, believe that the money could be better used in health or education;
- belief that the ***amount to be gained is too low*** and not worth the effort (see complexity) to secure it;
- the (perceived) social ***stigma*** attached to the receipt of benefits; and
- ***trust***: belief that government wants to cut the benefits budget, not to encourage uptake of benefits.

Estimating Unclaimed Entitlement

Estimating benefit uptake levels, or more specifically, the numbers of people not claiming a benefit to which they may be entitled, is exceptionally difficult and has challenged government, independent economists and social policy researchers for some time. It is dependent on securing answers to an extensive range of questions reflecting those asked in a benefit application. It is also dependent on accurate responses being received.

Information from the Northern Ireland Family Resources Survey (FRS) was used by the Department to produce annual estimates of uptake until 2009. The survey; the most detailed and robust source for measuring poverty and income levels in Northern Ireland, was introduced in 2002. Based on the correct range of information gathered to help assess benefit entitlement, only a very small number of respondents were identified each year as potentially being entitled to, but not claiming a means tested benefit. When this figure was then extrapolated to a Northern Ireland population level, the statistical confidence intervals increased to such an extent that the estimates could not be deemed statistically valid.

As a result of these very obvious limitations, annual estimates of benefit uptake produced using the FRS were considered statistically unreliable and following a public consultation in 2009, withdrawn⁴.

Summary

There is currently no more robust or statistically valid methodology for estimating the uptake of benefits than that offered by the Family Resources Survey. The last available estimates⁵ and other modelled estimates based on FRS data produced for the Department as part of an independent Strategic Review of Benefit Uptake in 2008/09, have, in the absence of other reliable evidence, directly informed the development of annual benefit uptake programmes. These have subsequently focused on targeting the specific customer groups identified within the reports as being less likely to take up benefit – i.e. ***those with potential entitlement to State Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance.***

Appendix 4 provides data on uptake of these benefits from 2005-2011.

⁴ Consultation on the withdrawal of Income Related Benefits, Estimates of Take-Up reports
http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats_and_research/withdrawal-of-the-three-national-statistics-publications.htm

⁵ DSD Income Related Benefits, Estimates of Take-Up reports
http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/stats_and_research/statistics_and_research-take_up.htm

In the context of our commitment to develop a longer term strategy the need for valid benefit uptake estimates remains. The Department has been seeking to identify alternative methodologies for producing estimates to inform uptake strategies, direct targeting in particular, and to help set targets for the future.

The Benefit Uptake Advisory Group has been recently established. It brings government and independent research expertise together to advise on and to identify robust benefit uptake methodologies. The group is chaired by the Department and the work is being led by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Membership also includes the Institute for Social & Economic Research, the Institute of Fiscal Studies, the Centre of Excellence for Public Health Northern Ireland and the Atlantic Philanthropies. The group will begin to report in summer of 2013.

Data Sharing

Where legal authority to use data, other than that held by the Department exists, these opportunities are used to improve targeting. However, opportunities have been limited to date. Optimal use will be made of the data emerging from legal gateways which have recently been opened up as well as others expected in 2013.

Where legal gateways do not exist but opportunities are identified, the Department is identifying other methods of optimizing impact through cross departmental collaboration and pooled resources. Examples include; securing customer consent to have the minimum required personal data shared with the Department for the purposes of benefit uptake when other interventions are being delivered i.e. the Maximising Access in Rural Areas (MARA) Project aimed at alleviating the impacts of rural poverty and social exclusion; and working with Land and Property Service to reach single women over 75 living alone due to the fact that they are often twice as likely to live in poverty.

Significant progress has been made in relation to securing additional data for targeting purposes in the last year.

The opening of a new legal gateway has allowed the Department to acquire a large range of income and related data from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). The data includes all income from tax credits, earnings and savings. The Department has started work to develop a Northern Ireland Household Income Administrative Database. The database will be achieved by merging all current social security benefit data with the available HMRC data, a complex task.

This is a highly significant development in the area of benefit uptake which will soon allow income levels to be estimated for all households in Northern Ireland.

Evaluation

At the completion of each annual programme since 2005, the Agency has evaluated outcomes and identified key learning to inform its approaches and future delivery models. An independent review of benefit uptake was carried out in 2008 and the Northern Ireland Audit Office⁶ and Public Accounts Committee⁷ examined the value for money and success of the work in 2010 and 2011.

We have learned that direct targeting, advertising and community level promotion and engagement are effective methods of reaching people, especially when delivered together. There is however, scope for improving outcomes. Working better across government and with a wider range of community based partners is critical to improving outcomes; and, where form completion remains the main or only method of claiming, face to face assistance with making a claim improves outcomes for older people.

We have also learned that actual outcomes achieved for people are much wider than the amount of money reported annually.

⁶ Uptake of Benefits by Pensioners, NI Audit Office 2011

http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/index/publications/report_archive_home/2011/report_uptake_ben_pens.htm

⁷ Report on the Uptake of Benefits by Pensioners, Public Accounts Committee 2012

http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Documents/Reports/Public%20Accounts/Report_45_11_15.pdf

Only fully validated new or adjusted claims to social security benefits, Housing Benefit and Rates Relief are reported. In the absence of data sharing powers, no monetary value is placed on other benefits and the wide range of additional services and supports gained by people as a result of benefit uptake programmes. This is best evidenced in the “Make the Call” advertising campaign where almost 40% of callers had entitlement to at least one benefit, service or support identified from a comprehensive benefit entitlement check. The successful claim outcome reported was 8.5% as only social security benefits, Housing Benefit and Rates Relief outcomes could be fully validated.

Strategic Priority 1: Our commitment to improving the evidence base

- We will use the findings and recommendations emerging from the Benefit Uptake Advisory Group to design future approaches to improving uptake of benefits;
- If estimates of entitled non recipients become available we will set challenging and realistic targets aimed at reducing the gap; and
- We will initiate a project to improve evaluation of benefit uptake programmes so that wider benefits and outcomes are reported.

Discussion Point:

6. Do you agree that the main barriers to benefit uptake are listed? Are there other factors that may have a bearing on decisions about having an entitlement check or making a claim?

4.2 Strategic Priority 2: Better Targeting

The current position

Since 2005 the largest area of spend on benefit uptake is in the area of direct targeting. These annual exercises involve applying a range of socio- economic filters from a range of Family Resources Survey (Households Below Average Income (HBAI)) and other shared data sets (indicating low incomes, such as Housing Benefit recipients) to identify likely entitled non-recipients.

Currently, 25,000 individuals are selected annually to receive a personal invitation from the Minister offering a free and confidential benefit entitlement check, delivered by a contracted independent advice sector organisation. After four weeks a follow-up telephone call is made if the offer is not taken up. In 2011/12, the Department made more than 22,000 follow-up calls in order to achieve a take up (delivery of an entitlement check) of 42%. 14% of these respondents went on to have a successful claim to benefit.

Direct targeting was supplemented from 2007 with promotional approaches involving direct mail-shots encouraging the uptake of State Pension Credit and from 2008 with a Freephone helpline, staffed by experienced benefit advisers delivering full benefit entitlement checks. The Freephone was initially promoted through mailings and posters issued to a range of trusted community partners across council areas in order to reach older people in settings where they feel comfortable and secure, for example; older peoples groups, church groups, pharmacies and GP surgeries. The approach was supported by a community outreach service providing face-to-face support to older people, including home visits to assist with making a claim.

More recently, in the context of the economic downturn and increasing fuel poverty, particularly for older people, over £500,000 of new investment was made in targeting in the 2011/12 Benefit Uptake Programme. Two new approaches were added to the ongoing direct targeting, community level promotion and outreach approaches. The “Make the Call” regional advertising campaign, which deployed a mix of media to encourage older people across Northern Ireland to “make the call” to have a full benefit entitlement check and potentially claim more money, was highly successful with 14,000 people having “made the call” and £3.2m in additional annual benefits generated.

The second new development was the Innovation Fund for Increasing Benefit Uptake. Jointly funded with the Atlantic Philanthropies, it was designed to provide the opportunity for community and voluntary sector partners to test fresh ideas and creative ways of engaging hard to reach people to increase uptake of benefits. Seven projects shared in a £375,000 allocation through entirely flexible contracts to test their own approaches over a twelve month period.

The introduction of the innovation fund reflects a shift from benefit uptake approaches used to this point. It demonstrates further recognition that some customers prefer not to engage with statutory services for benefit information and advice and approaches take account of the distinct range of personal circumstances faced by people rather than factors associated with particular benefits.

Projects end in December 2012. The impact of each project and the fund as a useful approach for identifying “what works” is currently being independently evaluated and a report will be produced by end March 2013. Outcomes and findings will directly inform future approaches that the Agency deploys to improve uptake of benefits in the context of this Plan and the emerging strategy.

The Department believes in continuing direct targeting. The value for money from this approach in 2011/12 was higher than every other benefit uptake activity, with £1 spent generating an additional £11 for customers and making up £7m of the overall £13.1m in additional benefits generated for over 4,000 people. However, the Department acknowledges it could achieve even more. Fewer than 6% of those targeted (14% of those who responded) made a successful claim to benefit.

Discussions with Northern Ireland Carer’s organisations has highlighted that many carers in particular do not claim benefits to which they are entitled. One of the main reasons is that they are unable to identify themselves as being in need due to their caring responsibilities. Outcomes from direct targeting exercises to date were low for carers and the 2012/13 Programme did not directly target carers. We are committed to finding better ways of reaching those with entitlement to Carer’s Allowance.

Given the continuing higher levels of fuel poverty being experienced in Northern Ireland it will also be important to ensure that household income levels of all those at risk of fuel poverty is optimised through benefit uptake and that all those potentially eligible are encouraged to seek home energy efficiency support and assistance. The 2012/13 Benefit Uptake Programme includes a fuel poverty element.

Strategic Priority 2: Our commitment to better targeting

- We will use data from the new Northern Ireland Household Incomes Administrative Database to improve direct targeting of customers for means tested benefits from 2013;
- New legal gateways for sharing data which may emerge from the Northern Ireland Welfare Reform Bill 2013, will be utilised, where possible, to access a range of data for targeting purposes;
- In the context of the Department's new fuel poverty strategy (Warmer Healthier Homes⁸) we will ensure that a full benefit entitlement check is offered to all households identified in any new area based approach pilot;
- We will work with specific key representative organisations to better address identified barriers to uptake of benefits; and
- We will consider new approaches to reaching carers in partnership with key carer's organisations.

Discussion Point:

- 7 In addition to those better targeting commitments set out are there others that you believe should be considered by the Department?

4.3 Strategic Priority 3: Improving Access and Delivery

The Current Position

The Department has successfully implemented a range of projects aimed at improving access. Examples include using, where it is available, existing customer data and information to populate and automatically move people from working age benefits to pension age benefits. The delivery of pension age benefits has been transformed in relation to access and delivery.

⁸ Department for Social Development Warmer Healthier Homes Strategy <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/warmer-healthier-homes.pdf>

Telephony is the preferred access channel. At the end of a claim to State Pension assessment of entitlement to State Pension Credit is made and the customer is transferred to make a claim. The time taken is on average around 11 minutes and the customer's voice is recorded as their "signature", removing the need for a form to be issued.

In a further service development, and cross government working, at the end of a claim to State Pension Credit potential entitlement to Housing Benefit and Rates Relief is made. Where potential entitlement exists, the information already gathered is used to populate claims for both benefits and the data electronically transferred to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive or Land and Property Services on the customer's behalf.

Other service development improvements include the opening of a new single Northern Ireland Pension Centre in July 2012 and the implementation of the new Bereavement Service, which is co-located within the Pensions Service, providing a holistic joined up service for callers reporting bereavement. An entitlement check is delivered as an integral part of this intervention at a difficult time for the customer.

Local and centralised benefit branches also deploy stakeholder outreach approaches to ensure staff understanding of the issues faced by customers in relation to access and best representing their circumstances. This is supported by an ongoing programme of work on continuously improving our research base and gaining relevant customer insight.

Building on recent significant service delivery improvements, there is a need to explore further options for maximising the use of technology to address access by older people to disability and carers benefits in particular. The Department's emerging Customer Contact Strategy is exploring new in and outbound access channels. This may be an opportunity to test new approaches which could improve uptake of these benefits.

For those benefits (Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Carer's Allowance) that require form filling, many people require face-to-face assistance with making a claim. Home visits are a resource intensive and costly method of delivering this assistance.

The role played by the Community Outreach Service to vulnerable customers is an important one, particularly in relation to ensuring that those who most need it are provided with face to face assistance in making a claim to benefit. The need will remain going forward and it is therefore important that we continue to monitor the effectiveness of the service in relation to the quality and the cost of delivery. When home visits to vulnerable customers are being carried out for reasons other than benefit uptake, this presents an ideal opportunity for an entitlement check to be delivered to vulnerable customers

In delivery terms there was some evidence from pre-consultation that written communication with older customers could be improved and that delays in processing benefits for those leaving prison or care could be avoided through closer working with a range of partner organisations to address barriers relating to evidence gathering.

Strategic Priority 3: Our commitment to improving access and delivery

- We will further develop the community outreach approach to ensure that home visits for the purposes of assisting with making a claim are targeted at those most vulnerable and that all other access channels are optimised to provide quicker outcomes for customers and best value for money.
- We will explore the cost of developing telephony access for Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance.
- We will work with the Department for Work and Pensions to review the effectiveness of written communications, particularly with older people and those living with disability.
- We will explore with key partner organisations new ways of receiving, authenticating and forwarding evidence required to complete some claims.

- We will work with stakeholders to improve staff awareness levels in relation to access and communication issues faced by key customer groups.
- We will, in the context of welfare reform and the changing entitlement framework, ensure that people are offered all necessary assistance with making transitions within the benefits system, to ensure that those who are vulnerable are not adversely impacted.

Discussion Point:

8. In addition to those access and delivery commitments set out are there other improvements that you believe should be explored by the Department?

4.4 Strategic Priority 4: Responding at key life changes

There is a clear need for intervention at critical life events as people's circumstances and potential entitlement to benefits change regularly. For many, wider services and supports are required at these times, often for the first time. Examples include, losing a job, leaving hospital, care or prison, being diagnosed with a chronic or life limiting condition. Disallowance of an existing benefit can also dramatically reduce household income levels. We need to ensure that when people's circumstance change they are made aware of new or additional benefit entitlement. Lessons may be learned from the Innovation Fund for Increasing Benefit Uptake which is currently being evaluated.

The Department sees the need for more integrated policy making and delivery internally and across government. Through leading the Inter-Departmental Group on Benefit Uptake, the Department seeks to optimise opportunities to share data and information to assist in targeting, delivering activities in partnership and to share outcomes.

The Department believes that there is room for more effective collaboration, particularly in relation to addressing the link between health and income inequalities. Building on the successful MARA delivery model, the Department wishes to work across government and with other agencies to ensure that, when people are leaving hospital, care, or prison; are diagnosed or living with life limiting or chronic conditions, in debt, making choices about taking up a job or facing redundancy; requiring help with the cost of school uniforms or meals, we are joined up and co-ordinated in our approaches and response to individual need and that, as an absolute minimum, practical referral mechanisms are put in place.

Strategic Priority 4: Our commitment to better intervention at key life changes

- We will continue to develop processes to ensure that the offer of a full benefit entitlement check is given to all customers reporting a significant change in circumstances, and/or no longer meeting the qualifying conditions for a key benefit.
- We will work across government to trial a range of partnership projects to ensure that people at key life changing events or transition points in their lives are offered a full benefit entitlement check and that practical referral mechanisms are in place.

Discussion Point:

9. What additional steps do you believe the Department could take to ensure that, at critical points of change in people's lives, they are aware of their entitlements to benefits, services and supports?

4.5 Strategic Priority 5: Strengthening Partnerships

It is evident from benefit uptake approaches to date that community level partnerships are key levers in reaching people with benefit entitlement. External advice sector partners are effective in delivering benefit uptake approaches. However, there are data protection limitations to their role; and almost a quarter of those directly targeted in the 2011/12 Benefit Uptake Programme chose to come to the Department directly. The Department's use of "trusted faces" and independent advice sector delivery partners in its direct and indirect targeting approaches has been successful.

Recent work with non-advice sector partners has proven to be highly effective in terms of cost and outcomes. The Department believes it should expand the range of community level partners with whom it works to improve benefit uptake.

There are also very clear benefits to be gained from working with civic and community level partners who are already engaging with people for reasons other than benefits and advice.

Strategic Priority 5: Our commitment to strengthening partnerships

- We will work with civic and community partners to ensure that they have access to promotional materials, effective referral mechanisms and clinic type support for benefit entitlement checks for those who need them.
- We will work with government and third sector partners to ensure that key messages are communicated at community locations across all council areas.
- We will carry out annual tracking research with partners into awareness and attitudes to claiming benefits by older people.
- We will learn from current collaborative work with the Public Health Agency and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on the MARA model.

Discussion Point:

10. How do you believe the Department could improve uptake of benefits through enhanced partnerships working with community level organisations?

4.6 Strategic Priority 6: Encouraging innovation

In October 2011, the Department, with input from the Atlantic Philanthropies, allocated £375,000 to seven projects aimed at testing fresh and innovative benefit uptake approaches. Pilots began by January 2012 and are currently being evaluated. Evidence from the mid -point evaluation indicates that partnerships, at all levels, are key.

Continuous improvement will be a key feature of benefit uptake programmes throughout the period of this strategy. In-house and externally contracted elements of the programme will be examined to identify best outcomes and new improved approaches.

Strategic Priority 6: Our commitment to encouraging innovation

- We will offer opportunities to community level partners to demonstrate success from innovative approaches which build on those already evidenced.
- We will continue to demonstrate innovation in delivery of in-house approaches to benefit uptake.

Discussion Point:

11. How do you believe the Department could improve uptake of benefits through innovation?

5.0 High Level Targets

Whilst the Department believes that most people in Northern Ireland who are entitled, are receiving their key benefit, it also recognises that changes in people's lives and circumstances are ongoing. Our success to date in generating additional benefit entitlement of £50 million is convincing evidence that more can be done.

The following high level targets aimed at alleviating the risk and impacts of poverty are proposed:

We will secure at least £30 million in additional benefits for a minimum of 10,000 people by 2016.

We will achieve this by:

- directly targeting a minimum of 75,000 people with the offer of a full benefit entitlement check;
- increasing the response rate by at least 10% on the current baseline of 42%; and
- reducing by 10% the number of claims not submitted by those who have potential entitlement identified on the current baseline of 61%.

Discussion Point:

12. Are there additional targets that you would like to propose?

6. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Do you believe that the Department should continue to invest in proactive approaches to encouraging benefit uptake?
2. Do you agree that people in all circumstances (in and out of work) are in scope for improved awareness and information with higher investment and priority being given to those groups identified as needing more direct intervention in order to take up benefits they are entitled to?
3. Do you agree that referral to a wider range of services and supports should be a key part of benefit uptake programmes?
4. Do you agree with the vision and aims of the strategy?
5. Do you believe that the 6 strategic priorities are right? Are there others that you would have expected to see?
6. Do you agree that the main barriers to benefit uptake are listed? Are there other factors that may have a bearing on decisions about having an entitlement check or making a claim?
7. In addition to those better targeting commitments set out are there others that you believe should be considered by the Department?
8. In addition to those access and delivery commitments set out are there other improvements that you believe should be explored by the Department?
9. What additional steps do you believe the Department could take to ensure that, at critical points of change in people's lives, they are aware of their entitlements to benefits, services and supports?
10. How do you believe the Department could improve uptake of benefits through enhanced partnerships working with community level organisations?
11. How do you believe the Department could improve uptake of benefits through innovation?
12. Are there additional targets that you would like to propose?

7. HOW TO RESPOND

We welcome your views, in any format, on the proposals set out in this discussion document. We have included a number of discussion points that you may find useful in framing your response.

The consultation period will run from **19 December 2012 to 26 February 2013**.

The document is available on our website www.dsdni.gov.uk/consultations or by contacting us at the address below. If you require an alternative format to suit your needs, please contact us.

The Department is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This means that we have to respond to requests made to us under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation.

Please send your responses by 26 February 2013 to:

Simon Stuart

The Social Security Agency
Department for Social Development
The Lighthouse Building
1 Cromac Place
Gasworks Business Park
Ormeau Road
Belfast
BT7 2JB

E-mail: simon.stuart@dsdni.gov.uk

Telephone: (028) 9082 9453

8. Your Opportunity to Inform: Public Consultation Meetings

Public meetings will be held in Belfast, Londonderry, Armagh and Ballymena on the following dates, times and venues are as follows:

- Belfast: Monday 28th January at 4.30pm, NICVA
- Ballymena: Tuesday 29th January at 4.30pm, ECOS Centre
- Armagh: Monday 4th February at 4.30pm, The Market Place Theatre
- Londonderry: Tuesday 5th February at 4.30pm, the Ebrington Centre, Waterside

Please check the Department's Consultation Zone on the website to confirm venues, dates and times: <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/consultations.htm>

Appendix 1

DIRECT TARGETING

Targeted exercises	Customers targeted	Older people targeted	Over 75s targeted	Percentage of over 75s	Benefits	Total annual benefit generated	Over 60s annual benefit generated	People Benefitting (targeted ex. + indirect targeting)
2005/06	3,746	3,746	Information not available	N/A	Pension Credit	£977,493.82	£977,493.82	385
2006/07	20,822	19,942	15,998	80.22%	Attendance Allowance, Carers Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Pension Credit	£6,603,955.76	£6,324,852.84	1,174
2007/08	22,454	9,586	2,374	24.77%	Attendance Allowance, Carers Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Income Support, Pension Credit	£6,592,316.63	£2,814,373.71	2,491
2008/09	24,829	18,275	4,959	27.14%	Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Pension Credit	£5,712,476.78	£4,571,695.17	3,960
2009/10	25,274	20,431	11,392	55.76%	Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Pension Credit	£6,046,829.11	£4,684,209.00	1,919
20010/11	18,973	18,034	12,136	67.30%	Attendance Allowance, Carers Allowance, Pension Credit	£3,704,210.03	£3,638,319.39	1,358
2011/12	25,028	22,162	19,309	87.13%	Attendance Allowance, Carers Allowance, Pension Credit	£7,168,342.42	£6,347,483.01	4,093
Direct Targeting Totals	141,126	112,176	66,168	58.99%		£36,805,624.55	£29,358,426.94	15,380

Indirect targeting

Mail-shots/Outreach	Customers targeted	Older people targeted	Total annual benefit generated	Over 60s annual benefit generated
Mail-shots 07/08	277,294	246,925	£7,692,398.24	£7,453,822.75
Community Level Outreach ⁹ 09/10	279	279	£78,557.99	£78,557.99
Community Level Outreach 10/11	636	636	£246,994.40	£246,994.40
Community Level Outreach 11/12	1,323	1,323	£316,760.14	£316,760.14
Make the Call	13,970	13,970	£3,279,210.98	£3,279,210.98
Outreach Service ¹⁰	6,456		£2,321,771.45	
Indirect Targeting Total	299,958	263,133	£13,935,693.20	£11,375,346.26
Overall Total	441,084	375,309	£50,741,318	£40,733,773

⁹ Community Level Outreach – promotional activities with non-advice partners such as GPs, local councils, community partnerships etc

¹⁰ Outreach Service – this is a team of Benefit Advisors who provide assistance and support for vulnerable customers throughout Northern Ireland

POVERTY LEVELS NORTHERN IRELAND 2002 to 2011

APPENDIX 2

Table 1. Relative Low-Income levels for Population Groups (NI)
Source: HBAI 2002/03 - 2010/11

Population Group	02/03 (%)	03/04 (%)	04/05 (%)	05/06 (%)	06/07 (%)	07/08 (%)	08/09 (%)	09/10 (%)	10/11 (%)	10/11 ('000s)
Before Housing Costs										
Whole										
Population	20	20	21	21	19	20	20	22	20	355.1
Children	25	26	25	25	22	24	24	27	21	93.0
Working age										
Adults	17	17	17	17	16	17	16	20	19	199.2
Pensioners	24	25	27	28	28	27	30	24	22	62.8
After Housing Costs										
Whole										
Population	21	21	21	21	19	21	20	23	20	358.3
Children	27	27	25	29	23	27	26	29	24	104.6
Working age										
Adults	18	18	18	19	17	19	17	21	20	210.3
Pensioners	18	20	21	17	21	21	20	18	15	43.4

*Rounded to nearest hundred

Population Group	02/03 (%)	03/04 (%)	04/05 (%)	05/06 (%)	06/07 (%)	07/08 (%)	08/09 (%)	09/10 (%)	10/11 (%)	10/11 ('000s)
Before Housing Costs										
Whole										
Population	15	14	14	13	12	13	13	13	13	231.7
Children	17	15	16	14	11	15	15	14	13	58.5
Working age										
Adults	13	12	12	11	11	11	10	12	13	135.8
Pensioners	17	18	19	16	21	20	20	14	13	37.4
After Housing Costs										
Whole										
Population	15	13	12	11	10	13	12	12	14	250.3
Children	19	16	16	14	11	17	14	16	16	69.7
Working age										
Adults	14	12	12	11	10	12	10	12	15	154.3
Pensioners	12	11	8	7	11	11	12	8	9	26.3

Table 2. Absolute Low-Income levels for Population Groups (NI)
Source: HBAI 2002/03 - 2010/11

*Rounded to nearest hundred

KEY BENEFITS IN PAYMENT PER HEAD OF POPULATION: NI / GB COMPARISONS

Disability and Carers benefits in payment across the UK

Benefits in payment	N. Ireland	% of population	GB	% of population	% Difference
Attendance Allowance	55,570	21.3%	1,600,670	15.9%	5.4%
Disability Living Allowance	188,640	10.5%	3,243,530	5.4%	5.1%
Carer's Allowance	36,200	2.6%	594,860	1.2%	1.4%

Working age benefits in payment across the UK

Benefits in payment	N. Ireland	% of population	GB	% of population	% Difference
Job Seekers Allowance	59,860	5.4%	1,589,640	4.3%	1.1%
Employment Support Allowance	33,020	3.0%	921,250	2.5%	0.5%
Income Support	77,390	7.3%	1,509,350	4.2%	3.1%

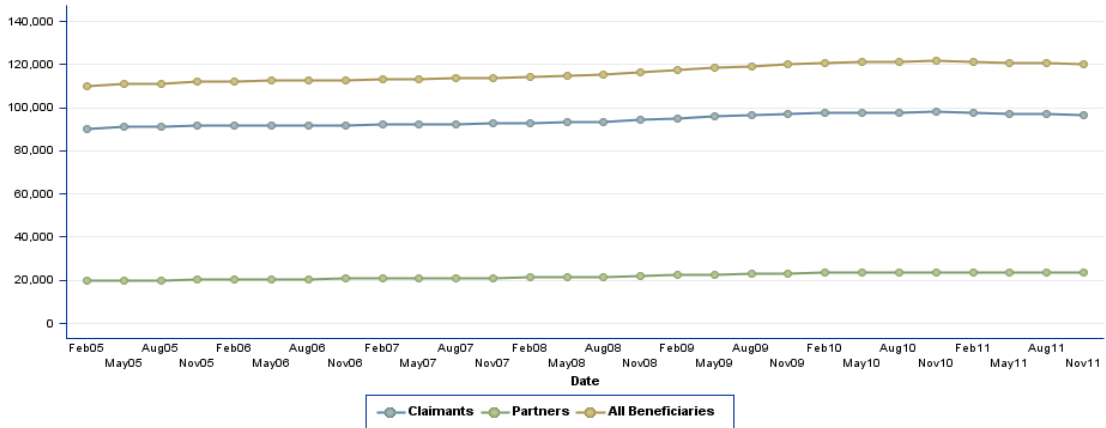
Non-working age benefits in payment across the UK

Benefit in Payment	N. Ireland	% of older population	GB	% of population	% Difference
Pension Credit	96,120	27.2%	2,615,540	18.7%	8.5%
State Pension	300,210	84.9%	11,521,870	84.0%	0.9%

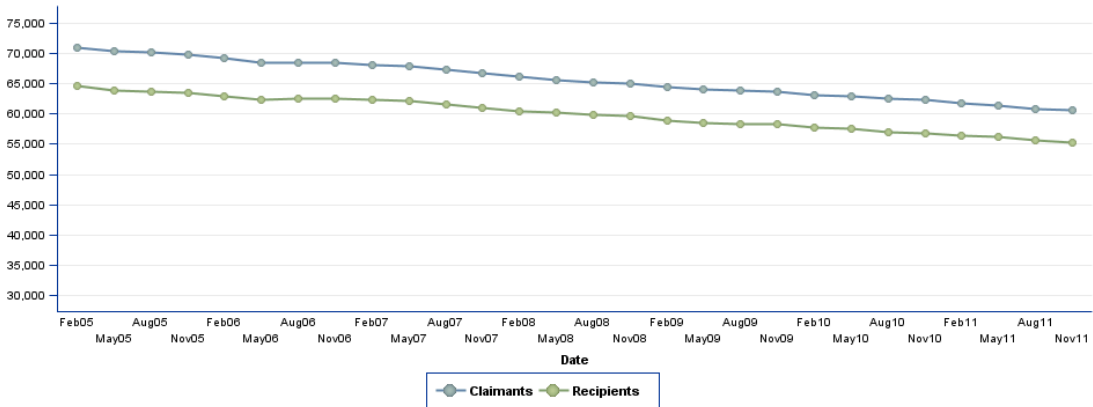
Source: Feb 2012 DWP / DSD

RECEIPT OF KEY BENEFITS INVOLVED IN RECENT TARGETED APPROACHES - TIMES SERIES

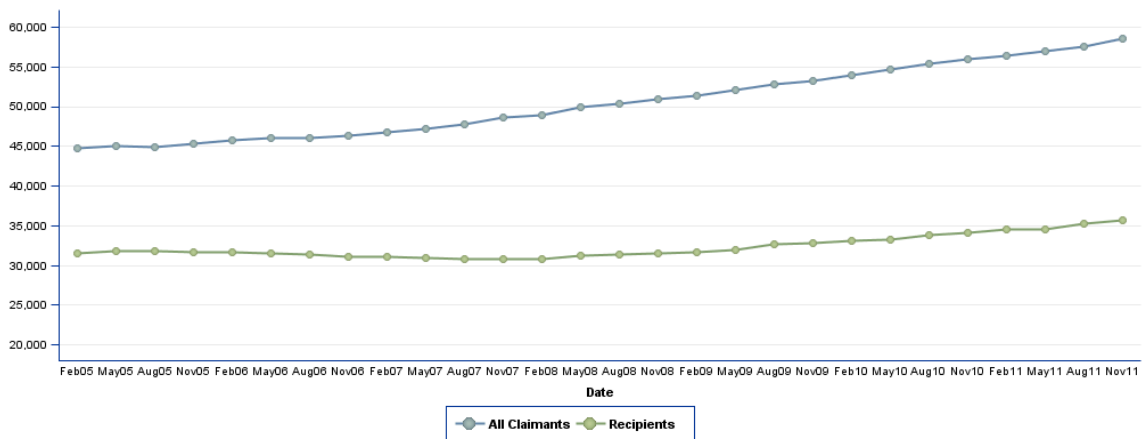
State Pension Credit Claimants and Beneficiaries: time series



Attendance Allowance Claims and receipt - time series



Carer's Allowance Claimants and Recipients – time series



Improved Incomes & Outcomes: Recent real case studies from benefit uptake programmes.

Lily, 58 from Larne is widowed, owns her own home and is living with a disability. She made the call to the freephone helpline.

Lily's husband was the breadwinner and had put some savings away before he passed away. Lily was awarded Bereavement Benefit for one year after his death. Once that stopped Lily had been living off those savings and was finding it hard to make ends meet. She made the call and had her benefit check. One of our Community Outreach Officers assessed her circumstances and found she was potentially entitled to Disability Living Allowance to help with her mobility and care needs.

Now...

Our Community Outreach Officers helped with the application forms and now Lily is better off by £105.90 each week.

Betty and Harry are in their 80s, they both have some health problems and care for one another. They made the call to the freephone helpline.

Betty and Harry were struggling to pay their household bills. Harry was already in receipt of State Pension Credit, whilst Betty was getting Attendance Allowance to help with her own care needs. She also claimed Carer's Allowance for looking after her ill husband. They didn't think they would be entitled to more. However, a Community Outreach Officer gave them each a personal benefit assessment and found they could potentially be entitled to more.

Now...

Harry's Pension Credit has increased by £83.93 per week; he receives £77.45 a week in Attendance Allowance and also gets Carer's Allowance of £32.60 for looking after Betty. There is now an extra £193.98 every week going into their household meaning things are not as tight and they can get the things they need.

Carole is 46 from Coleraine and cares for her mother-in-law, Fran. She made the call to the freephone helpline.

Carole is the main carer for her elderly mother-in-law who has arthritis. Fran claims £77.45 in Attendance Allowance. Until Carole called the freephone helpline she didn't realise that she could be entitled to some benefits herself.

Now....

Carole claims £58.45 each week in Carer's Allowance. In addition she received an arrears payment of over £700. This was paid in respect of the previous three months where she was entitled to the benefit but didn't know about it.

Jimmy, 71 from Craigavon was getting paid benefits but a change in his circumstances meant he got some more.

Jimmy lives alone and was getting help with his housing costs. His state pension and low rate Disability Living Allowance were also in payment. His health had deteriorated and required some more assistance with his personal care needs. When he contacted the freephone helpline he was offered some help with an application to review his benefit claims.

Now...

A higher rate of Disability Living Allowance is in payment. With the additional £56.90 per week Jimmy is able to afford the extra help he requires with his care needs.

Johnny, from Newtownabbey, was referred to Advice NI under the benefit uptake direct targeting programme.

Johnny is 84, married with an income of £284 per week made up of state and private pensions. He owns his home, which he shares with his wife.

He was visited at home in December 2011 and Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance were discussed. He did not meet the qualifying conditions for Pension Credit but it was clear that he had care needs and his wife was providing the care. An Attendance Allowance claim form was completed.

Now:

Johnny was awarded Low Rate Attendance Allowance. He said that this extra money would make a big difference to him and his wife as he will use the money to see a physiotherapist, chiropractor and to get his toe nails cut.

Additional Income generated per week: £49.30

Mr and Mrs Stuart were referred to Advice NI under the benefit uptake direct targeting programme.

Mr and Mrs Stuart are an elderly couple both aged over 80 living in Carrickfergus in a Northern Ireland Housing Executive property. They were in receipt of State Pension and a small amount of State Pension Credit. Mrs Kelly was in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

Mr Stuart suffered with serious medical conditions after having a heart attack and a stroke. These impacted on his daily personal care needs. Advice NI assisted with Attendance Allowance, Community Care Grant, Carer's Allowance and Pension Credit applications for the couple

Now:

Mr Stuart is in receipt of £73.60 per week in Attendance Allowance. Additional State Pension Credit payments are paid to the couple as they are both now entitled to Severe Disability and Carer's Premiums of £172.60 per week.

Additional Income generated per week: £246.20 per week.

Produced by:

Department for Social Development, Social Security Agency,
Lighthouse Building, The Gasworks, Belfast BT7 2JB

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December 2012

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Appendix 2

Development Department

Your reference: Maximising Incomes and Outcomes

Our reference: #143184

Being dealt with by: David Purchase

Date: 29/1/13

Tel: 02890 320202 ext 3792

Simon Stuart
The Social Security Agency
Department for Social Development
The Lighthouse Building
1 Cromac Place
Gasworks Business Park
Ormeau Road
Belfast
BT7 2JB
E-mail: simon.stuart@dsdni.gov.uk

Dear Simon,

RE: Consultation: Maximising Incomes and Outcomes

Please find attached our provisional response to this consultation document. Please note that this is still subject to final ratification by full council.

Provisional Response

1.1. General comments

- 1.1.1. Thank you for asking us to comment on the draft plan. We look forward to seeing the final plan in due course.
- 1.1.2. The Council has a particular interest in this issue and would welcome further opportunities to support this initiative. We currently run several schemes to help people claim the benefits that they are entitled to. For example we run various schemes to support older people in the city and we fund generalist advice provision across the city. In the three years from 2008-11, our five Advice Consortiums dealt with 268,500 enquiries. It has been estimated that these helped people to access approximately £9 million per year in benefits.

1.2. Specific Questions.

1. Do you believe that the Department should continue to invest in proactive approaches to encouraging benefit uptake?

- 1.2.1. Yes, our feedback is that many people, especially older people are still losing out through a fear of form filling, a complicated claim system, a 'make do' attitude and in some cases fear that they will lose money rather than gain through a benefit check. Some of the proactive approaches such as the 'make the call' campaign have been quite successful and these campaigns should be repeated. It is, therefore, important that the Department continues to encourage benefit uptake and also to raise awareness about what is available in a way that makes the benefits system more accessible and removes the stigma that is sometimes attached to receiving benefits.



- 1.2.2. While we believe that all households should be made aware of the types of benefits that exist and how these can be accessed, some targeting may be useful. We consider the most vulnerable to be older people-carers, people with a disability, those who suffer from dementia and their families. Effort should be made to identify ways to access particular groups and increase knowledge of their needs.
- 1.2.3. The Department also needs to be exceptionally proactive to encourage benefit uptake with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and work to overcome particular barriers these group experience – literacy issues, need for interpreting services (in face to face work and information leaflets) and make use of existing structures/organisations which support these groups e.g. the migrant Centre in Belfast, the Regional Interpretation Service, libraries, appropriate community groups etc.

2. Do you [believe] that people in all circumstance (in and out of work) are in scope for improved awareness and information with higher investment and priority being given to those groups identified as needing more direct intervention in order to take up benefits they are entitled to?

- 1.2.4. Yes, anyone can get into circumstances where they need the safety net of the state welfare system and so a life-course approach should be adopted rather than waiting until people are at their most vulnerable. However, we recognise the importance of targeting those in acute situations e.g. older people, people with care needs and caring responsibilities.
- 1.2.5. There is a need for improved awareness-raising generally given the current economic climate and the changes being brought about by welfare reform. There are people now relying on benefits who may never have received them before and who may be unsure of what is available and the processes for claiming.
- 1.2.6. Carers from BME backgrounds are also a particularly vulnerable group, often unaware of their status as carers and seeing caring as part of their family responsibilities. We suggest that the Department hold information and awareness raising sessions on the process of carer's assessment and other benefits for social workers and other healthcare professionals so that they can help BME carers gain the benefits they are entitled to.
- 1.2.7. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's annual study "Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland 2012" reports that 120,000 children in Northern Ireland live in poverty, half of them in working households. Therefore, we have some concern that there is no mention of child poverty.
- 1.2.8. The report also stated that all of the increase in poverty over the previous 3 years came in working or retired households. Thought, therefore, needs to be given to targeting the "working poor" – a substantial and growing group perhaps through information being sent out with pay slips, using an organisation's intranet or holding information sessions.
- 1.2.9. There should also be recognition of people who are becoming vulnerable through the recession. The Simon Community has just highlighted an increase in homelessness in NI. These could be targeted through shelters and relevant organisations. Those with a mental health illness and substance misusers are particularly vulnerable as they may lack confidence and often need one-to-one assistance.

3. Do you agree that referral to a wider range of services and supports should be a key part of benefit uptake programmes?

- 1.2.10. Yes, a collective and co-ordinated approach to reducing the impact of poverty should be adopted. For example, the department should work with other departments and agencies in respect of advocating the availability of other support services such as mental health, free transport, dental services and the availability of local health and volunteering programmes. Adopting a holistic approach will ultimately impact on the level of poverty and associated issues such as reducing isolation and improving mental health & well being. However, those who are involved in the delivery of benefit uptake programmes need to be fully aware of what other services and supports are available and, therefore, all SSA staff need regular training. Forwarding a leaflet, telephone number or website to



someone may not always be appropriate. Sometimes a more personal and supportive approach is necessary.

1.2.11. In the current approach we feel that there needs to be more co-ordination. For example, the UMA project (MARA delivery model), BCC neighbour targeting project and some of the fuel poverty initiatives seem to be targeting similar groups of people. A combined approach would be cheaper and more effective.

4. *Do you agree with the vision and aims of the strategy?*

1.2.12. Yes, we agree with the vision that *every individual* and household have access to the benefits that they are entitled to. There may be some slight contradiction because of the emphasis on *targeting specific groupings* with a particular emphasis on older people. However, we understand the need for this as discussed in our response to previous questions.

1.2.13. In general we think the stated aims are clear and concise. However the document may be improved if:

- An additional aim was made to include the conversion of awareness into uptake;
- The second aim was expanded to ensures awareness of the full range of benefits 'and how to access them';
- The third aim regarding support could be strengthened. In particular it may benefit from support being described as 'timely support.'
- The principles included 'empathy' on the list, particularly to address the strategic priority 4 'responding at key life changes'.

5. *Do you believe that the 6 strategic priorities are right? Are there others that you would have expected to see?*

1.2.14. As detailed in the consultation document a lot of work is needed to reliably understand the problem therefore priority 1 'Improving the evidence base' and 2 'Better targeting' are sound.

1.2.15. Priority 3 would be more effective if it referred to simplifying access rather than improving access. Many people with direct information are not accessing and converting to uptake.

1.2.16. Priority 4 'Responding at key life changes' is key.

1.2.17. Priority 5: would have benefited from the evaluation of the current innovation fund projects.

1.2.18. Priority 6 Innovation: needs some caution to ensure that any innovation helps to simplify access rather than complicate the system any further.

1.2.19. There needs to be a strategic priority to raise awareness around the impact of welfare reform. Also there needs to be either an additional priority, or something specific, about better use of communication channels in one of the priorities. For example, a recent campaign between Age NI and Belfast Telegraph created over £140,000 in additional claims in two weeks.

1.2.20. Methods of communication: different methods will reach different people at different times; websites are one way of sharing information but not everyone has access to the internet or the IT skills to use it. Therefore, a range of communication methods need to be used

1.2.21. At the consultation sessions, attendees were told that benefit uptake is about "getting people more money, getting people the support they need and improving lives".

1.2.22. If the DSD want to deliver the vision of Maximising Incomes and Outcomes and to support people and improve their lives, they need to continue to offer one-to-one support and home visits. On the face of it, it may seem that these offer less value for money than telephony services but those who are most vulnerable often need an advocate to help



them through the claim process. The Social Security Agency may get less money back for every £1 invested compared with telephony services but if this support is not available, there will inevitably be a cost to another Government Department (probably Health).

- 1.2.23. It is, therefore, important that the DSD consider benefit uptake in a more holistic way and from the point of view of impact across Government Departments, bearing in mind the implications on life inequalities of not reaching people and not just from a value for money perspective.
- 1.2.24. The priorities seem quite separate and they would benefit from being cross linked. For example:
- Understanding need and addressing it with suitable delivery;
 - Co-ordinated, flexible and simple approach from awareness to uptake especially at key life changes;
 - Partnership development; revision of existing practice and innovative approaches for local delivery to compliment uptake

6. Do you agree that the main barriers to benefit uptake are listed? Are there other factors that may have a bearing on decisions about having an entitlement check or making a claim?

- 1.2.25. We agree with the issues listed but feel there are some additional ones (which may be subsets of some of your original list):
- Confusion, lack of awareness on how to get advice and assistance and the availability of information.
 - Frailty, physical difficulties and feeling of vulnerability.
 - Impact of medical conditions e.g. depression in actively seeking entitlements or support.
 - Literacy levels and support requirements.
 - Language used to communicate to target audiences.
 - Ensuring the method suits the audience.
 - The time needed to make an application rather than immediate sign up or resolution.
- 1.2.26. Making a claim easily and with support is vital for BME communities who need language support, literacy support and confidence building to understand our systems and the benefits available.
- 1.2.27. A mental health illness and use of substances impacts on a person's ability to function not only day to day but also hour by hour; it can also affect their ability to plan for the future. A system that only allows people to apply for benefits through telephony or the internet will exclude many people including those from BME communities, those with poor literary skills and those with a mental health illness and substance misuse issues. It is vitally important that the Department continues to support its home visiting service and/or funds advocates within community organisations, the advice sector or other groups to support those with mental health and/or substance misuse issues in relation to applying for benefits.
- 1.2.28. People are sometimes concerned about sharing information about their income and personal circumstances with someone working for a Government Department. Benefit uptake may be improved if benefit entitlement checks and benefit uptake campaigns are undertaken through advice centres and organisations that have an existing presence in an area and are trusted within a community.
- 1.2.29. A move to applying for benefits only through telephony and the internet will be a barrier for those who do not have I.T. skills or access to the internet.

7. In addition to those better targeting commitments set out are there others that you believe should be considered by the Department?

- 1.2.30. There appears to be a high level of information on the targeting of older people but only a brief mention of other groups. There does not appear to be a real commitment to



targeting 'families.' It would be helpful to be able to understand the priority of different target groups according to the level and type of benefit. It would also be useful if the targeting commitments reinforced an appropriate 'method' when targeting customers. For example, The "Make the Call" campaign is well-known and recognised; and could be extended to other groups.

- 1.2.31. More thought could be given as to how to target carers and to identify the types of carers who are most vulnerable. This might involve, for example, working with the Alzheimer's Society or charities working with children with a disability, various charities, schools, credit unions, groups dealing with specific issues (such as disability), GP surgeries, and Psychiatric nurses.
- 1.2.32. The "working poor" are a substantial and growing group and could be targeted through awareness-raising campaigns in workplaces.
- 1.2.33. There may be other useful sources of information to inform future targeting efforts. For example, the new census results and lessons learned from the innovation fund.

8. In addition to those access and delivery commitments set out are there other improvements that you believe should be explored by the Department?

- 1.2.34. Closer links could be developed with local government benefits. For example direct access/ referrals to the Council's 'BOOST' scheme and oil stamps. This is particularly relevant under the Council's commitment to targeting health inequalities. The Community outreach facility needs to adopt a more holistic approach as highlighted elsewhere in our response.
- 1.2.35. A more co-ordinated approach between the different initiatives that are operating such as the "Make the Call" campaign, MARA/UMA project and the area based fuel poverty project to ensure that the same groups of people are not always being targeted.

9. What additional steps do you believe the Department could take to ensure that, at critical points of change in people's lives, they are aware of their entitlements to benefits, services and supports?

- 1.2.36. Improved data sharing between Government Departments would help to identify people whose situation changes and who become entitled to benefits. Messages about entitlements need to be communicated in various forms, through TV, radio, posters, workplaces, etc.
- 1.2.37. Work with DHSS&PS to target people who have just taking on considerable caring responsibilities. Carers are now offered an assessment as a statutory requirement.
- 1.2.38. Increase the use of champions in media adverts (e.g. the older people's commissioner) as this adds credibility to the message.
- 1.2.39. Add the principle of 'empathy' referred to in question 4.
- 1.2.40. A comprehensive booklet outlining the points of change and all of the benefits to which people may be entitled would be a useful additional step, as would publication of this booklet as an online reference and distribution of a summary to raise awareness to all households. A settings approach may help also ie Doctors surgeries, hospitals, advice centres, schools and carers groups.
- 1.2.41. When people are facing critical points of change in their lives they are at their most vulnerable. The benefit system and associated services and supports need to be as accessible and user friendly as possible.
 - Firstly, in order to avail of something, people need to know what services and support is available. It would be helpful if there was clear information available in one accessible guide or reference point. This 'Overview' of entitlements and services should avoid being text heavy and make use of visual information such as diagrams eg. flow diagrams.



- It would also help if agencies themselves didn't treat a client's issue (eg. benefit entitlement) in isolation, but acted as a signpost / referral to other services that they think the client might benefit from (eg. blue badge; social services support; community group befriending scheme; counselling services; volunteering opportunities).
- When an individual makes contact with an organisation it would be helpful if they had a named member of staff who they could deal with in terms of follow-up telephone calls etc. instead of dealing with a different person everytime they make contact with the organisation.
- If a person is in a particularly vulnerable condition organisations should encourage them to volunteer a family member or trusted friend to assist them in dealing with the department.

10. How do you believe the Department could improve uptake of benefits through enhanced partnerships working with community level organisations?

- 1.2.42. If the Council implements additional computers, as per the Super Connected Broadband Project proposals, it could offer access to information on benefits via IT facilities at Community Centres. It may be possible to increase the integration of DSD's work and the Council's existing Advice services or our partners who are already working with vulnerable older people e.g. good morning schemes, older peoples networks/forums.
- 1.2.43. The Department could use and build on partnerships that already exist with community organisations and could also link with groups and organisations that are already working with people who are likely to be eligible for benefits and/or vulnerable to changes in welfare reforms, bearing in mind that adequate funding needs to be provided if organisations are expected to undertake additional work.
- 1.2.44. There may be scope for working more closely with local cross sectoral partnerships such as Health, Community Safety, Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships. Additionally, working with networking agencies such as NICVA and the Community development for Health Network.
- 1.2.45. There are partners who could support this work in the advice sector and community organisations as long as they have the appropriate assistance and are properly funded to do so. Many of them are already offering some sort of advice/signposting service which could be built on but we understand that they are currently working to capacity and could only offer additional support with extra funding and investment.
- 1.2.46. The Department could target organisations that support people with mental health illness and/or substance misusers. It is, therefore, also vital that the Department continues to offer one-to-one support and home visits and that voluntary and community sector organisations are funded to support those who are most vulnerable.
- 1.2.47. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation ((Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland 2012), 120,000 children in Northern Ireland live in poverty, half of them in working households. Families with children could be reached through antenatal and postnatal clinics, health visitors or schools. The "Make the Call" campaign could be extended to include families with the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Young People appearing in the advertisement.
- 1.2.48. Other suggestions include:
- The 'There and Now' service, which is a one visit/ call service for benefits based on the learning from existing approaches referred to in the consultation document;
 - Allowing 'advocates' for claimants, perhaps from partner organisations who can be the direct contact for follow up paperwork and this may link to the 'community outreach services.'
 - Work with the Regional Interpreting Service to promote benefits uptake with BME families



11. How do you believe the Department could improve uptake of benefits through innovation?

1.2.49. Possible solutions include:

- As per our answer to 10, the Council could offer access to information on benefits via IT facilities at Community Centres.
- Putting more investment into the Innovation Fund projects that were successful and role them out in an effective way.
- More work with faith-based groups who have contact with older people.
- Using older champions to encourage older people to 'make the call.'
- Text messaging service.
- Working with local community groups.
- One stop shops.
- Consider extending the community outreach service to work in conjunction with the advice sector. Perhaps staff could provide local benefit outreach clinics from local advice centres.

1.2.50. However, there needs to be a balance of business as usual and innovation. For example the changes arriving with the 'Universal credit system' may be perceived as creating more complication. Efforts are needed to ensure that any new system is embedded and advertised effectively, so that existing and potential claimants are not confused.

1.2.51. The Department could ask for comments and feedback from people already receiving benefits – what has been their experience of support on uptake within and outside of the Department, what was helpful and what was unhelpful, use of surveys, comment boxes, phone calls etc. – and respond as needed.

12. Are there additional targets that you would like to propose?

1.2.52. A more challenging target is required to measure the conversion from awareness to uptake. This appears to currently sit at 6% and so might need further investigation.

1.2.53. SMART targets are needed for all priority groups that have been identified in terms of under claiming; awareness; uptake etc. In particular, targets should be developed for carers or other groups/specific benefits.(attendance and carers allowance).

13. Any further comments, recommendations or suggestions you would like to make in relation to this plan.

Thank you for asking us to respond to the proposals.

Yours faithfully

David

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