

# Development Committee

Tuesday, 5th March, 2013

## MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Stalford (Chairman);  
The High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston);  
Aldermen Ekin and Stoker;  
Councillors Austin, Hendron, Hussey, Keenan,  
Kelly, Kyle, Mac Giolla Mhin, Mallon,  
Maskey, McKee, McVeigh, O' Donnghaile,  
Ó Muilleoir, Reynolds and Spence.

In attendance: Ms. S. McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives  
and International Development;  
Ms. C. Taggart, Community Services Manager; and  
Mr. B. Flynn, Democratic Services Officer.

(The Deputy Chairman, Councillor Ó Muilleoir, in the Chair)

### Apology

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Webb.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 5th and 19th February were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th March.

(The Chairman, Alderman Stalford, in the Chair,)

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations were reported.

### Support for Independent Traders

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **"1 Relevant Background Information**

##### **1.1 'Backin' Belfast' Campaign**

**Members will be aware that the Council and DETI have co-invested in a promotional marketing campaign called 'Backin' Belfast'. BCC has contributed £400k towards a £1m campaign with the balance of funding from DETI delivered via BVCB and NITB. The campaign is open to engagement from businesses all across Belfast. The campaign has been funded through to end of March 2013 and is coordinated by Belfast Visitor and**

**Convention Bureau (BVCB) with the animation programme being led and delivered by Council.**

- 1.2 To date, some traders beyond the city centre have taken part in the campaign by forwarding offers and engaging in the social media activities linked to the Backin' Belfast initiative. However there are still opportunities for further engagement within the programme timeframe. Belfast City Council has been directly encouraging businesses and local trader groups to engage in the campaign.**
- 1.3 BCC also agreed last month to allocate the sum of £25k for East Belfast to participate in a complementary campaign to Backin' Belfast. Work has been completed with the local trader groups in East Belfast on developing a 'Spend Local' promotion which will take place on 23 March. This will comprise a leaflet drop to local homes in East Belfast promoting the 23 March as a key date for special offers and on-street entertainment.**
- 1.4 Members also asked that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee outlining the options available to the Council to address requests which might be submitted from traders affected by disruption in other parts of the city, outside of east Belfast.**
- 1.5 Officers were asked to engage with businesses to understand the challenges that they were facing. Given the timescales, it has not been possible to have a comprehensive engagement programme with all business group representatives. However officers did manage to meet with a range of groups and/or their representatives, including:**
  - West Belfast Traders' Forum**
  - Lisburn Road Business Association**
  - Sandy Row Business Forum**
  - Traders from Ardoyne area**
- 1.6 In addition, officers were in attendance at a breakfast hosted by the Lord Mayor at which representatives of 9 traders' groups were in attendance. Discussions focused on the impact of the downturn on business as well as possible solutions.**

**2 Key Issues**

**2.1 Quantifying the impact of disturbances**

Members will be aware of the concerns of many traders – both city centre-based and across the city’s neighbourhoods – at the impact of the recent protests and associated disruptions on their businesses. A number of requests for additional support have been received by the Council. Officers and Members have met with a range of groups to gain an understanding of the key challenges and to consider what types of support may be required to help the businesses at this difficult time.

**2.2 Key issues raised during those meetings include:**

- Reduced footfall especially in late afternoons resulting in shops closing early
- Businesses unable to provide deliveries and answer call-outs
- Cancelled bookings (restaurants, professional service providers)
- Staffing issues – employees not being able to get to work or having to send staff home, with the associated loss of wages for those staff
- Travel difficulties due to lack of public transport
- Reduction in shoppers from outside Belfast
- Request to consider financial support (hardship fund)

**2.3 Retailers have also acknowledged that the disruptions are not the only contributing factor to the difficult economic trading conditions and that their business is under pressure because of the wider downturn.**

**2.4 Traders have raised these concerns through a range of groupings and organised events and have met directly with support agencies and politicians. The Lord Mayor of Belfast recently hosted a meeting for local trader groups at which he took the opportunity to discuss the current support provided by the Council and to ascertain what particular issues the traders were facing and how they could be supported in addressing these. Representatives from nine traders’ groups attended the meeting and they covered a range of potential support issues. They also suggested that they would welcome the opportunity to have a regular engagement with politicians and senior officers from Council on support for independent retail development in Belfast.**

**2.5 Members will be aware that, outside of existing funding allocations (outlined below) there has not been any specific provision set aside to provide financial support to the business groups. All trader groups and businesses met in recent weeks have asked for financial support also including**

some direct support for individual businesses as well as other support for any initiatives which would help drive footfall back to their areas. However, one trader group has submitted a specific request. The West Belfast traders are seeking £6,000 to contribute towards a localised Backin' West Belfast campaign to coincide with an upcoming festival event in early March. The funding would contribute to building wraps on vacant properties, t-shirts for traders, street bunting, taxi wraps and street animation.

- 2.6 Similarly, the Lisburn Road Business Association has requested additional financial support for promotional events that are being planned for the end of March. They have also asked that consideration be given to supporting a member of staff for the organisation in the future (no specific financial allocation requested).
- 2.7 Members will be aware that there have been no further funds allocated for these purposes at this stage beyond the Council's commitment to the Backin' Belfast campaign of £400k and a specific allocation of £25k for East Belfast to deliver a complementary campaign in association with Backin' Belfast. Members are asked to consider how they want to respond to such requests from trader groups and local businesses which have made contact with Council as outlined above.
- 2.8 Retail Action Plan – current support available  
Members will be aware that the retail action plan for the current year was approved by the Development Committee on 17 April 2012. This included a range of business support, marketing and promotion and networking initiatives to support local independent traders. A funding allocation of £210,000 was set aside for this work. The majority of this was set aside for development support to help traders' groups to become operational and to engage in targeted promotional activity. It was intended that the Council's resources would help lever other funding and that it would be used to create sustainable business associations that would not be wholly reliant on public support.

- 2.9 Belfast City Council is currently supporting six existing constituted traders groups (against a baseline of three in the previous year) through Area Campaigns Support as detailed below:

<u>Trader Group</u>	<u>Awarded</u>	<u>Amount paid to date</u>
Lisburn Road Business Association	£40,000	£25,000
Ballyhackamore Business Association	£28,705.00	£24,399.25
Strandtown Traders Group	£29,565.00	£14,782.50
Ormeau Road Business Association	£14,742.00	£8,845.20
Antrim Road Business Association	£4,500 plus advisory support	£3,825.00
West Belfast Traders	£25,170.00 plus advisory support	£10,068.00

- 2.10 All activity and expenditure on the letters of offer to the groups above expire on 31 March 2013. Groups have been encouraged to undertake all elements of their approved projects promptly to ensure full delivery of outputs and maximisation of the full budget.

- 2.11 Belfast City Council has also supported the establishment of six new groups (against a target of three) as below:

Trader Group

Cliftonville Circus Traders.	These new groups have all recently become constituted.
Stranmillis Business Association	
Castlereagh Business Association	They are all currently working with an advisor (provided by Council) to develop action plans and series of marketing initiatives.
Newtownards Road Traders	
Hollywood Arches	
Finaghy Traders Group	

- 2.12 In addition to the trader group activity, Belfast City Council also supports a range of business development activities – both bespoke activities focused on the independent retail sector and wider support initiatives that independent retailers can avail of. These include flexible mentoring support (2 days' targeted support to address a specific development need). To date, 20 traders have availed of this support.

- 2.13 Members are advised that work is now due to commence on developing a new retail plan for 2013/14. A full review of the results of the current year's plan along with a stakeholder engagement and consultation process is required to re-shape the plan in line with current needs. Many of the issues raised

by trader groups to date and outlined above will need to be taken into account and it may be that an enhanced budget is required for this work in 2013/14. Members are asked to note that a further report on the new retail plan and process for its completion will be submitted to Committee next month.

**3 Resource Implications**

**3.1 Financial**

The Retail Action Plan was approved by the Development Committee 17 April 2012. A funding allocation of £210,000 was set aside at this time.

**4 Recommendations**

**4.1 It is recommended that Members:**

- Encourage ongoing engagement by businesses and business groups in the Backin' Belfast campaign
- Consider whether Council wishes to provide any additional financial support to affected groups across the City in advance of the new support plan
- Consider how to respond to the two specific requests (from West Belfast Traders' Forum and Lisburn Road Business Association)
- Note that a further report on a new retail support plan for the coming year will be presented to Committee in April."

The Committee considered the contents of the report, particularly the two specific requests for assistance which had been submitted by the Lisburn Road Business Association and the West Belfast Traders' Forum. The point was made that, whilst the Council had, at its meeting on 29th January, agreed to accede to a request for assistance from traders in the east of the City, that decision had been taken on an ad hoc basis in recognition of the disproportionate impact which the 'flags' protest had had on that part of the City. It was suggested that the further requests for assistance submitted should be considered only within the context of the future Retail Support Plan. Further Members suggested that, in light of the precedent which had been set by the Committee in agreeing to support retail initiatives in East Belfast, it might be prudent, as a one-off gesture, to meet the requests as submitted.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by The High Sheriff (Councillor Kingston),  
Seconded by Councillor Hussey,

That the Committee notes the engagement which has been ongoing with the business community as part of the "Backin' Belfast" campaign. However, it agrees not to provide any additional financial support to affected groups and notes that all further requests will be considered as part of the Council's new Retail Support Plan, which will be submitted for consideration by the Committee in April.

On a vote by show of hand, ten Members voted for the proposal and nine against and it was declared carried.

### **Global India Conference**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**"1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 At Development Committee of 8 May 2012, Members agreed to support the hosting of the Global India Business Meeting (GIBM) on 23-24 June 2013.**
- 1.2 GIBM is a major international networking event that brings together over 350 chief executives from major Indian companies with their European counterparts to examine the potential for trade and investment between the two regions.**
- 1.3 The GIBM is the foremost annual gathering of Indian business leaders and their global counterparts. The event is to open to CEO's of the world's leading companies.**
- 1.4 Horasis the event organiser has a partnership with leading Indian firms and uses this network to connect with other leading companies across the globe. The 2012 Global India event took place in Antwerp, Belgium on 24-25 June. Other cities which have recently hosted the event include Munich, Madrid and Naples.**
- 1.5 As part of the GIBM, Belfast City Council is leading on the development of a wider India week to entice Indian visitors to stay longer as well as engage local communities in Indian culture and business opportunities locally.**

2 **Key Issues**

2.1 **GIBM**

Whilst Horasis is the organiser of the conference, BCC along with Invest NI (INI) are co hosts. Horasis organises the programme and secures delegates. BCC is in the lead in producing the event locally through event management and directing logistics. BCC is also heavily engaged in inputting to the conference programme, securing local delegates, marketing and communications and organising the opening and closing headline events.

2.2 Additionally BCC is in the lead in developing opportunities for local companies to benefit from the GIBM meeting and in creating tourism and hospitality packages to maximise economic return to Belfast. Along with INI, BCC is also paying attention to potential invite lists and confirmed delegates in order to identify key contacts for bi-lateral programmes to be put in place where appropriate. Through INI's offices in India, advance contact is being made with a number of companies for lead generation which will be followed up directly during the conference itself to pursue trade and investment opportunities.

2.3 On 12 February, Frank Richter, chairman of Horasis visited Belfast once again for an update with the co hosts (INI and BCC). Since the last update in November 2012, the Europa Hotel has been confirmed for the conference, with the opening ceremony and dinner in the City Hall and the closing dinner in Titanic Belfast.

2.4 In the last 2 months, the programme for GIBM has been revised, sections changed and Belfast has secured a stronger presence on the panels. INI have been working with BCC as co host to identify key businesses that need to be invited to ensure maximum market exposure to India as well as investment from Indian companies. More than 250 CEO's (mostly from India) have confirmed their attendance. They are from organisations such as Mahindra Satyam (ICT), Wal Mar and Hero Motocorp. The main programme consists of plenary and dialogue sessions addressing a range of topics from India and World Economic Outlook; to 'India's Finance Sector – Riding the Next Wave'.

2.5 Indian Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr Anand Sharma has confirmed his attendance. Mr Vijay Bahuguna, Chief Minister of Uttarakhand has also confirmed his attendance. Contact has been made with OFM/DFM to secure the attendance of the First and Deputy First Minister at the opening ceremony.



- 2.6 Horasis have invited Mr Gregory Barker, MP, Minister of State for Energy and Climate Change and Vince Cable Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills to attend and are exploring participation from ROI. BCC officers are exploring the possibility of a European Commissioner attending.
- 2.7 **Wider India Week**  
In addition to the main Global India conference, Belfast has secured a number of additional events which are linked to the GIBM. Organisations such as, the UK Indian Business Council, the Young Presidents Association, European India Chamber of Commerce, and Eurochambers are holding separate meetings in Belfast to tie in with delegates attending the GIBM. This provides BCC with the opportunity to create additional links with important umbrella associations focused on trade and investment in India. BCC is offering event management and organisational support along with identifying 'open' sessions where local companies and business groupings can be connected in with their Indian counterparts to promote business opportunities.
- 2.8 Due to active engagement by BCC, Queen's University Belfast (QUB) are hosting a seminar entitled 'A Partnership to promote the Knowledge Economy' which will take place immediately following the main conference. Its aim is to profile the R&D expertise of QUB and the types of industry support available to International Companies.
- 2.9 BCC is also leading on developing a wider cultural programme. Officers are engaging with Arts Council, Artseka and Lord Rana, to develop cultural linkages as well as Tourism Ireland and Northern Ireland Tourist Board to develop tourism packages for visitors. Events such as food tasting at St Georges Market, a mini Mela, Bollywood films and a culinary tour of India are being developed.
- 2.10 Members will be aware that G8 will be held the week before (17-18 June.) Officers are investigating the potential to connect Global India with G8 to maximise profile and further embed international linkages.
- 2.11 **Wider Belfast/India International Strategy**  
As part of developing a wider India Strategy, Officers have been reviewing the Indian market. An Indian Stakeholders Group meeting, was held on 13 February to discuss where they engage in India, their experiences and how they see the Council working with them in the Indian Market. The Indian Stakeholders Group comprises, Andras House, Arts Council, Belfast Metropolitan College, Belfast City Airport, Belfast City Centre Management, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, Bombardier, British Council NI, European Commission NI, Ministry of Defence, INI Chamber of Commerce, NI Connections, NI Tourist Board,

Office of First and Deputy First Minister, Queens University Belfast, Titanic Quarter, Tourism Ireland and the University of Ulster.

- 2.12 As part of this stakeholder review, officers have been examining where BCC would be best place to maximise investment potential both to Belfast and for Belfast companies exporting to India. Future opportunities include joint outward missions, stronger connections with the local Indian community as well as new sister cities to strengthen Belfast's profile in market.
- 2.13 Belfast City Council-potential civic/destination partners  
INI have offices in Mumbai and New Delhi and are working with officers to identify where Belfast City Council should engage in the market. Officers have also been working with UK Trade and Investment to seek advice.
- 2.14 To date INI are suggesting Belfast should consider a potential civic linkage with Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh is India's growth centre with an emphasis on pharmaceuticals, IT, manufacturing (cars), tourism and food processing. It is located in central India and has a highly skilled workforce.
- 2.15 Additionally BCC are also being asked to engage with Chennai by QUB as a potential civic linkage. Chennai is host to the world's largest mobile phone factory (Nokia), Xerox's Global Innovation/Tech, SYSTIME's Global Delivery Centre and is a global manufacturing hub for Samsung, LG.
- 2.16 INI is organising a trade mission to India on 14-19 April. The mission includes Mumbai and New Delhi. They have invited BCC to accompany them to see firsthand, where Belfast should engage in India. Barry Clarke, Regional Director INI for Asia will assist in developing a separate programme for Belfast as will Dr Satish Kumar from Queens University should BCC wish to participate.
- 2.17 The purpose of the INI mission is to support 25 SMEs secure potential trade deals with Indian businesses in their sector. BCC are invited to learn from INI's in-market experience on how Indian Business Culture operates and also Council will be offering civic support to local entrepreneurs seeking to deliver additional economic return for Belfast. Should BCC decide to participate on this mission it would also provide a key opportunity to promote the GIBM Conference in Belfast and attract more delegates as well as provide a platform to visibly start showcasing Belfast as a destination to the international marketplace of India.

**3 Resource Implications**

**3.1** Since the last update in November 2012, managing the GIBM, the India week and developing intelligence on the Indian market is being developed with staff resource in the European Unit.

**3.2 Budget of GIBM**

The budget of GIBM was agreed at the Committee meeting on 6 November 2012. The total is approximately £160,000 including £30,000 from INI. This includes venue hire/catering, transport and marketing.

**3.3** Cost of BCC participation in INI's trade mission to India for three participants is approximately £6,000. This includes flights, accommodation and subsistence.

**5 Recommendations**

**5.1** Members are asked to;

1. Note the update on GIBM and wider India events and strategy.
2. Consider whether BCC wish to participate in the INI Trade Mission in April 2013.
3. Agree that a further report on potential civic links or sister cities be brought back to Committee at a future date."

The Committee agreed to partake in the Trade Mission to India and agreed further that it be represented thereat by the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the Director, Head of Economic Initiative and International Development (or their nominees).

### **Belfast Technical Trade Mission 2013**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1 Relevant Background Information**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has been playing a key role in supporting the development of the Creative, Digital and Technology sectors in Belfast, since 2004, through the work of the Economic Development Unit and more recently through the Council’s Super Connected Cities project and the IBM Smarter Cities Initiative.
- 1.2 Members will also be aware that, at the meeting of the Development Committee, 21 February 2012, a draft Memorandum of Understanding to advance the relationship with the Irish Technology Leadership Group on a permanent basis, was approved.
- 1.3 The Irish Technology Leadership Group (ITLG) is a group of Irish and Irish American senior executives based in Silicon Valley, California who are active in the global technology industry. They work to promote industry linkages between USA and Ireland through a range of collaborative initiatives including trade visits, award ceremonies and events in both USA and Ireland.
- 1.4 Members have had initial conversations with INI representatives of some local companies and with Queens University, the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland Science Park and Digital Circle on the possibility of the Council leading a Belfast specific trade mission to the United States. The focus of the mission would be on the digital / technology sector to further support the development of the initiatives outlined above and to help raise the profile of Belfast as an investment location. It is clear from these discussions that an opportunity exists to support Belfast based technology companies in the international marketplace, through participation on a trade mission to the west coast of America in particular.

#### **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 It is now recommended to Members that Belfast City Council take the lead in scoping out and implementing a trade mission to Silicon Valley and the west coast of America in October 2013 and to gain the support of Invest Northern Ireland and Northern Irish Connections in the delivery of the project.
- 2.2 It is proposed that a total of 20 Belfast-based digital and technology companies participate on the mission and will be selected through an open and competitive application process.

- 2.3 It is proposed that financial support for company participation will be through existing Invest Northern Ireland channels or will be paid directly by the participating company.
- 2.4 Belfast City Council will help in generating contacts and business leads through our existing networks and those provided through the partner organisations. A showcase and a series of one to one meetings will be organised, in turn providing a unique platform from which local companies can target key businesses and potential clients based in the United States, with the aim of securing new business.
- 2.5 It is proposed Belfast City Council's contribution to the trade mission will be up to a maximum of £20,000. It is envisaged these costs will contribute to travel, accommodation, Showcase and meeting facilitation.
- 2.6 The proposed trade mission will also provide Belfast City Council the opportunity to 'sell' the City and a series of civic visits and meetings will be organised to explore future collaborative opportunities. To date, visits to Berkeley, San Francisco and Portland, Oregon have been suggested.
- 2.7 In order to progress initial discussions and to explore the potential of this project further, it is recommended that Members approve the development of the trade mission to the west coast of America and agree in principle to supporting the mission on the provision of a more detailed plan and itinerary.

## 5 Recommendations

- Note the proposal to develop and implement a trade mission to the west coast of America in partnership with Invest Northern Ireland and Northern Irish Connections, in October 2013.
- To approve a total budget of £14,750 to support the trade mission."

The Committee adopted the recommendations and noted that further update reports on the Trade Mission would be submitted in due course.

**Belfast Restaurant Week**

The Committee was reminded that the inaugural Belfast Restaurant Week, which had been supported by the Council, the Department of Regional Development, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme, had been deemed to be a significant success which had raised the profile of the City. It was reported that the initiative had been nominated for a range of tourism and industry showcase awards in 2013, and that attendance at the ceremonies would afford a valuable opportunity for the Council to promote Belfast Restaurant Week 2013. The events for which the project had been nominated to are set out hereunder:

- The Northern Ireland Food and Drink Awards Ramada Hotel – Friday, 15th March;
- The Northern Ireland Tourism Awards - Belfast Waterfront Hall - Thursday 30th May; and
- The Licensed and Catering News Awards - Europa Hotel - Friday 7 June.

The Committee agreed that, if shortlisted, the Council would authorise the attendance at the ceremonies of the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman (or their nominees), together with three Members of the Committee who had been instrumental in promoting the event, as well as the Director (or his nominee). It was noted that the cost of attending each event would be in the region of £450.00.

Chairman