



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast City Centre Management Company
Date:	16 January 2008
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Relevant Background Information

At a meeting of the Development Committee on 12 December 2007, Members agreed to receive a presentation from representatives of Belfast City Centre Management on their draft Business and Operation Plan for 2008/2009.

In 2007 executive changes took place with the appointment of Mr Billy McGivern as Chairman of the BCCM Board, and Mr Andrew Irvine as City Centre Manager.

Under its new management team, Belfast City Centre Management Company has repositioned itself, the Company's initiatives and operating plans are now centred on:

'delivering additional services into Belfast city centre, on behalf of its core funders, which contribute in a measurable way to a cleaner, safer and more accessible city.'

A copy of the BCCM 2008/2009 Operating Plan is attached at **Appendix 1**

Key Issues

The City Centre Manager reports that some existing BCCM initiatives have been extremely successful, including the 'Retail Crimewatch Scheme'. This scheme in 3 years has delivered a 51% reduction in stock loss due to retail crime (shoplifting), saving and estimated £8.2m of stock. BCCM are now keen to extend this scheme to cover juveniles, who are responsible for 36% of retail crime in Belfast City Centre.

The success of BCCM's Safer City initiatives has placed pressure on BCCM's small administrative resources.

The work of BCCM, which is presented in detail in the appended Operating Plan, covers three areas of work:

- ***Delivering Direct city centre services:***
BCCM will deliver its own services, which add value to the city centre, e.g. City Centre Representatives, City Beat Policing, Radiolink, City Safe Crimewatch scheme.

- ***Facilitating and assisting in the delivery of our funders City Centre Initiatives:***

BCCM will work 'on the street' (when requested and as directed) to assist with initiatives such as the Evening Economy, Independent Retail Training, Retail Benchmarking and Gap analysis, Belfast in Bloom, Waste Management and Streets Ahead.

- ***Direct liaison with City Centre Businesses:***

BCCM will provide strong communication links between the private sector businesses in the city centre and central and local government.

In order to deliver the specific targets provided in the 2008/2009 Operating Plan, BCCM has put in place a structured programme of Retail Forums, Area Focus Groups and Activity Working Groups to support the 'on the ground' work of the City Centre Representatives and City Beat Police Officers. BCCM report that additional resources are needed to deliver the appended plan for two reasons:

1. Existing operational staff are being utilised for administrative duties when they are sorely needed on operational business liaison duties.
2. With the opening of Victoria Square on 6 March 2008 the retail floor plate of the City Centre will increase by over 30%, representing some 200 new retail businesses.

In order to fully implement the business and programme activity of the 2008/2009 Operational Plan additional human and financial resources will be required. Specifically BCCM needs 3 additional City Centre Representatives for business liaison, 2 administrative assistants to support Board, Area Focus Group and Activity Group meetings, and a suitably qualified accounts clerk. It is also envisaged that the duties and responsibilities of the Office Manager would be increased to include a Project Management role.

The Committee is asked to note that in 2008/2009 BCCM's funding for the City Centre Representatives through the Community Safety Partnership is likely to be cut from £20,000 to £12,000.00.

BCCM is seeking equal funding for 2008/2009 of £190,000.00 each from Belfast City Council, Department of Social Development and private sector businesses. A financial forecast is included in the Operating Plan.

The Governance and auditing structure for BCCM is included within the Operating Plan and officers can report that BCCM has now fully met all the requirements of the Council's Internal Audit section.

The work of BCCM, as detailed in the Company's Operating Plan, is extremely important to the success of Belfast City Centre, and crucial to achieving the buy-in of the private sector within the City Centre to key Council initiatives such as the Evening Economy, Committee Safety Partnership, Retail Training Initiative and Belfast in Bloom.

An on-going review is being undertaken into the roles and responsibilities of Belfast City Centre Management and Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau; however it is unlikely that any structural changes would be brought forward within the next two years. In this context, some security of tenure would greatly assist BCCM to deliver on its objectives for the city.

Financial Implications

Belfast City Centre Management Company is seeking £190,000 in core funding.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the details of the Belfast City Centre Management Company Operating Plan for 2008/2009 and to consider an increase in annual funding for Belfast City Centre Management from £140,000 to £190,000.00 per year for two years commencing 1 April 2008.

Key to Abbreviations

BCCM - Belfast City Centre Management

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Belfast City Centre Management 2008/2009 Operating Plan

Appendix 1