



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Branding Belfast
Date:	21 February 2008
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Relevant Background Information

To update Development Committee on progress towards developing a brand for Belfast and the proposed roll-out of the new brand.

Key Issues

New Belfast Brand

The process behind the creation of a new brand for Belfast commenced in June 2007 with the appointment of Lloyd Northover, international brand consultants. It was clear at this stage that the formal "Smiley Face" logo developed in 1997 was largely redundant. Many new logos had been developed on an ad hoc basis which had led to multiple messages being given out about Belfast. In an increasingly competitive city market it was agreed that the time had come to renew the Belfast brand. The agreed objectives and activities and key milestones to date are set out in **Appendix 1**.

Visioning Phase

At the crucial 'visioning' stage all the learnings from Primary Research and work sessions were coalesced into 3 options for a vision for Belfast - the basis of the new Brand – that is both inspiring and authentic, rooted in reality but representing people's aspirations for the city. These options were explored in terms of developing a unique proposition for the city, a set of values and qualities associated with it that people think are important and to be preserved/promoted.

The distinctiveness, value, credibility and sustainability of these options (for all audiences) were tested through further interviews, steering group and reference group sessions, a Belfast City Councillor briefing session and wider reaching activities including a web based survey and a programme of research for external audiences (from visitor and investor markets). The following proposition is the distillation of the central message which will be conveyed through the brand.

Proposition

A unique history and a future full of promise have come together to create a city bursting with energy and optimism. This is Belfast's moment.

The time is right For us to create a thriving, vibrant city. Bringing together our strong sense of identity, our resilience and enterprise, and our renowned warmth and wit, we are seizing this opportunity with both hands. Proud of our heritage, we embrace the future to build an even better Belfast, providing a warm welcome For visitors, an attractive, exciting environment For investors and a great place to live.

This is the core message for the brand, the foundation and framework for further development.

Creative Development Phase

This is the current phase in the brand process its main purpose being to create the visuals for future campaigns. Options for the creative visual and verbal expression of the brand will be explored and tested in further presentations and work sessions including steering, reference group and Belfast City Councillor meetings and focus groups with the local community.

At the same time, the practical implications of the new brand will be thoroughly explored across a broad range of possible physical, cultural and policy manifestations for how the brand will affect people's real, tangible experience of the city – the 'brand experience' that builds over time to help attain the vision of Belfast.

Tangible outputs of the project will be tools, resources and documentation that enable the successful and effective implementation of the new Belfast City Brand, including:

- Brand assets (logo, proposition, "look and feel", imagery and verbal identity, etc.)
- Brand architecture – including using the new brand with existing brands in the city and throughout Northern Ireland
- Visual branding guidelines
- Brand Experience documentation and report
- Illustrated (in pictures and words) possible applications of the branding – web, collateral, signage etc

The creative will be brought to committee for final sign off in March.

Suggested Timeline of Creative Development Phase

12 and 13th Feb	Focus Groups presented with creative options.
26th Feb	Reference Group (focus Groups with Belfast City Councillors)
March	Brand Creative to Committee
Feb and March	Business/investors breakfasts/internal audiences briefed on brand proposition, vision and visual identity.
April	Launch in Belfast Waterfront Hall (tbc)

Brand Roll Out Phase

In the short term, the brand roll out phase will take the following shape:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Stakeholder</u>
Brand influences the creative of Belfast City Council communications and marketing materials, web, street dressing etc	BCC
Brand adoption by key local businesses	Private Sector
Brand adoption by key local media	Press, radio and TV (Belfast based)
Brand adoption by venues, events, festivals	Arts sector
Brand adoption in all tourism marketing and communications	BVCB
Brand adoption by Belfast retail sector	BCTC and BCCM
Brand adoption by Belfast educational organisations	UUJ, QUB, BMC
Brand adoption by community organisations	APBs, NICVA

BVCB have now commenced work on the roll-out of the brand. A sum of £250,000 has been earmarked in the 07/08 budget to support this process and bring the brand to life.

It is essential having come this far that we proceed to maximise the value of the branding. To realise this, and based on good practice elsewhere, it is essential that the Brand launch and rollout is carefully planned. The budget would cover a number of elements of the brand unveiling:

- Brand launch event aimed to maximise publicity and interest for brand. This event is planned for the Waterfront Hall but will also involve other sites throughout the City on the day and following on in the year. £25,000.00
- Development of promotional materials which will be designed from the logo. It is essential that the logo lends itself to marketing which in turn can produce its own income stream through sales in a number of venues across the City. £15,000.00
- The inclusion of the logo in all materials and networks where it can be placed. This includes Council controlled publications and events, and BVCB/BCCM channels. We are currently seeking further endorsements and use of the logo through wider channels in business, retail, education, the community and other sectors. £25,000.00
- The production of 2 new advertisements aimed primarily at the tourism market for use over the next year and beyond. It is intended that these advertisements will set new standards for the promotion of Belfast and so require higher funding than has been normal. £130,000.00

- Showcase promo for use in promotional and information work with citizens aimed to instil pride and give information on what the City has to offer. £25,000.00
- Showcase promo for use with business/investment sector detailing the new Belfast and the advantages of development/investment in the City. £25,000.00
- General DVD for distribution. £10,000.00

Should the next stage be successful and the Committee, and subsequently Council, approve the new logo then a real opportunity for impact would be to have the launch scheduled in late April just prior to the US International Conference in May 2008.

The logo itself will attract interest and it is likely that additional funding both direct in kind may be attracted from a number of sources in relation to wider impact. Discussions are taking place with a wide range of sectors and organisations on this matter.

Resource Implications

Financial
£250,000 (already within budget).

Recommendations

Members are asked:

- note progress of process;
- approve funding as outlined for brand of £250k; and
- agree in principle to the launch of new brand at end of April 2008.

Documents Attached

Appendix A – Agreed Objectives and Methodology, Summary of Activity and Key Milestones.

Appendix 1

Aim

The aim of the project is to develop a multi faceted umbrella brand which represents collective pride in the city's past and its ambition for the future and under which all those with an interest in the future prosperity of Belfast and Northern Ireland can comfortably accommodate themselves

Objectives

The key objectives of the projects are to:

- to develop a new brand which will **reinforce** Belfast's position as:
 - o a place for **companies** to locate and grow their business
 - o a place which **attracts talent** to meet the **skills** needs of our key sectors and organisations
 - o a magnet for leading **research, education and innovation**
 - o a location with a high **quality of life** for its citizens
 - o a quality leisure, business, **tourism** and conference destination
 - o a **confident and contemporary city** with a unique history and built heritage
- develop an integrated brand image for Belfast that creates a framework within which all those involved in marketing the city can operate and at the same time **add value to other city marketing**, creating synergy and avoiding duplication or competition between city marketing budgets
- develop a brand image to **direct the city's marketing** by understanding how our city is viewed by its key sectors
- discover how various markets and sectors perceive the city. This will show its **strengths and weaknesses** and allow the city to build on its highlights, develop its strengths and challenge its weaknesses
- to develop a brand image with a **range of messages** for different sector that will encourage others to use the same look and feel and style and benefit from co-ordinated integrated marketing
- develop a brand that encompasses a vision for the city that can be used to inform investment, policy and operational decisions about Belfast.

Summary of Activity and Key milestones

Phase /date	Status	output
Secondary Research June-July 07	complete	Analysis of relevant data using the resources available from partner agencies to inform the brand development process Delivery of a report summarising key learning and output of research
Competitive benchmarking June- July 07	complete	Undertaking a competitive positioning analysis to establish Belfast's relative position in the marketplace. This will give Belfast's strengths and weaknesses in key sectors, including leisure tourism, conferences, inward investment, leisure and retail Identify a competitive set of city regions in each sector against which Belfast should benchmark its performance Assessment of the way Belfast is currently represented in the marketplace inc visual styles and promotional language- how the current family of Belfast brands actually works Delivery of a report including a competitive set analysis
Product Awareness June- Aug	complete	Lloyd Northover undertaking series of FAM/orientation visits to experience Belfast. Walking, taxi and bus tours, review of literature
Administration/ management and decision making	ongoing	
Setting up of working group June- Jan 08	Complete and on going	Working group established consisting of BVCB and BCC weekly conference calls to Lloyd Northover. Oversees the administration of the contact and the management of the process
Setting up of Steering Group June- Jan 08	Complete and on going June – introduction and process July- dissemination of key words and concepts Sept- 5 propositions sense checked and distilled to three by LN following feedback	Meets at key milestones to make decision on the way forward for the brand and receives progress reports from LN. Sense checks the information going to the Reference group. Consistent viewpoint through out the project Steering group members also spokespeople and brand champions. Identifies and develops brand values Development of a final tested concept with creative

<p>Establishment of Reference Group June- Jan 08</p>	<p>June – introduction and process</p> <p>July- dissemination of key words and concepts</p> <p>Sept- 5 propositions sense checked and distilled to three following group feedback</p> <p>Dec- results of web survey and recommendation for one proposition</p> <p>Feb 08- creative development of proposition</p>	<p>The reference groups are a group of key decision makers and stakeholders (as well as potential funders) who have an important role to play in the execution of the Belfast brand. The role primarily is to :</p> <p>Test brand concepts and values</p> <p>Test and develop the chosen concept</p> <p>Buy into set of brand guidelines for implementation of the brand</p> <p>Act as brand champions</p>
<p>Belfast City Council Oct- Jan 08</p>	<p>Series of one to one briefings with Councillors</p> <p>Development Committee (Nov)</p> <p>Officers briefing Via 4 workshops And briefing 13th Feb</p>	<p>Brand spokespeople, engagement</p> <p>Engagement/ideas</p> <p>Engagement /ideas</p> <p>Decision on the final recommendation and the creative</p> <p>Engagement/ideas</p>
<p>Primary Research Local June- Sept</p>	<p>Workshops, one to one interviews, focus groups, telephone interviews with key sectoral representatives of tourism, government, local government, youth, community, culture, press arts, media</p>	<p>Develop and deliver a programme of research amongst partners in target sectors of tourism, businesses and citizens</p> <p>Analyse the research outputs and develop and evaluate a set of brand positions for Belfast which reflect the diverse stakeholder groups and which provides the material from which the elements of the brand may be constructed</p>
<p>Community Consultation July - Oct</p>	<p>2 workshops Consultation via APBs and reference group Council officer consultation</p>	<p>Encourage engagement by community sector and to sense check ideas/propositions</p>
<p>Press ongoing</p>	<p>Press briefing (Aug) Via Reference group PR- series of pics and</p>	<p>Encourage engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hosting the web based survey - publicising the process

	press releases Press one to one meetings (BVCB/BCC)	- brand spokespeople/devt brand ambassadors
Out of state primary research Oct	(2 each city) October 23rd - Glasgow October 24th - Barcelona October 30th - Manchester October 31 - Dublin	Perceptions feedback Prepare and test concepts feedback on propositions feedback on creative
Market testing In and out of state 10th Oct – 8th Nov	Web based survey to test the 3 brand propositions distributed widely via (see attached)	Analysis of the web based survey and development of one brand concept
Brand development Jan-March 08	Creative development	Set of ideas, values, architecture inc tone of voice, typefaces, visuals and colour palette Branding implementation guidelines
Feb and March	Focus groups	Creative focus groups with all major stakeholder groupings (7 groups)
And Brand roll out April 08- ongoing Launch		See ideas attached

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