



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Tourism Development Update
Date:	21 February 2008
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Therese McGivern, Director of Development, ext. 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext. 3459 Pier Morrow, Acting Tourism Development Manager, ext. 3585

Relevant Background Information

Community Tourism Update

Members will be aware that a city-wide application was submitted under the Belfast Regeneration Office Action Plan bid to co-ordinate, support and implement a programme of community tourism initiatives in each of the Area Partnership Board localities. Issues developed as a result of changes in personnel in a number of organisations and new officers having to lead on the project without full knowledge of the project. This resulted in numerous time consuming queries and reclarifications. In addition there was a lack of response back from some of the APBs thereby delaying progression.

A meeting was held on 29 January 2008 with BRO and the Area Partnership Boards to discuss what is realistically deliverable by the end of March 2008. Each APB indicated its expected outputs and at this time we are waiting for word back from BRO to confirm or otherwise that the money is going to be approved with a final letter of offer. (awaiting outcome from BRO Meeting 29 January 2008)

Evening Economy - Café Culture

The adoption of cafe culture by the hospitality sector has been curtailed due to the 1993 Obstruction Order enforced by the Department of Regional Development. With the implementation of smoke free legislation in 2007 it was recognised that the provision of outdoor seating would become a bigger issue. Belfast City Council's Tourism Unit took the lead in 2006 by establishing a Cafe Culture Steering Group which included representatives from the DRD, DSD, the NI Licensed Trade Association, Belfast Vintners, NI Hotels Federation, BCCM, BVCB, officers from BCC Regulatory Services, Planning and Environmental Health Unit.

In July 2006 the then Chair of BCC Tourism and Promotion of Belfast Sub-Committee, Councillor Dodds, wrote to the Minister for DRD asking that the Roads (NI) Order 1993 be re-examined with a view to amending it to accommodate café-style culture and in particular in anticipation of the impact of the introduction of smoke free legislation. No reply was received and a number of attempts to get feedback were to no avail. It is now a matter of urgency that this be progressed and a meeting with the relevant local ministers be sought to discuss it.

Conference Subvention

At a meeting of the Tourism and Promotion of Belfast Sub-Committee held in February

2000 it was agreed to adopt a conference subvention policy for securing and supporting national and international conferences in Belfast. Four requests have been received and the proposals have been assessed against the funding criteria and they meet the category for financial support as detailed below:

(1) Many Core & Reconfigurable Supercomputing Conference 1-3 April 2008 at Queen's University

It is anticipated that the economic impact from this conference will be £120,000. Funding of £500 is recommended towards this conference.

(2) 2nd European Mediation Conference 10-12 April 2008 at Waterfront Hall and Hilton Hotel

It is anticipated that the economic impact from this conference will be £223,000. Funding of £1,000 is recommended towards this conference.

(3) ARMO Global Conference 7-9 September 2008 at Waterfront Hall

It is anticipated that the economic impact from this conference will be £243,500. Funding of £1,000 is recommended towards this conference.

Resource Implications

Conference Subvention

£2,500 for 3 conferences.

Recommendations

Community Tourism

Members note the above update.

Evening Economy – Café Culture

That the Minister of the Department of Regional Development and the Minister for the Department of Social Development meet with a deputation from the Committee to progress the matter.

Conference Subvention

Funding of £500 is recommended to the Many Core & Reconfigurable Supercomputing Conference 1-3 April 2008 at Queen's University.

Funding of £1,000 is recommended to the 2nd European Mediation Conference 10-12 April 2008 at Waterfront Hall and Hilton Hotel.

Funding of £1,000 is recommended to the ARMO Global Conference 7-9 September 2008 at Waterfront Hall

Key to Abbreviations

APBs – Area Partnership Boards

DRD – Department of Regional Development

DSD – Department of Social Development

BCCM – Belfast City Centre Management

BVCB - Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

ARMO – Alliance of Rotational Moulding Organisations