



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Tourism Development Update
Date:	7 March 2008
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Therese McGivern, Director of Development, ext. 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext. 3459 Pièr Morrow, Acting Tourism Development Manager, ext. 3585

Relevant Background Information

Street Trading

Members will be aware that since the 2001 Street Trading Act came into force, BCC has sought to eradicate illegal street trading to ensure the public's health and safety, but has also sought to enhance the experience of shopping in the city centre and the standing of licensed street traders. BCC has identified high quality independent retailing as a crucial asset to the competitive success of Belfast. To complement and build on the significant contribution of our existing markets, BCC is now investigating opportunities for high quality 'street trading' in the city centre. It is envisaged that this will bring colour, vibrancy and increased footfall levels to designated parts of Belfast's retail centre. On Friday 20 July 2007 Belfast City Council launched a Statutory Consultation Period on its proposals to designate the streets. Responses will be considered at the Licensing Committee Meeting in April 2008.

Attached as **Appendix 1** is a draft response from the Development Committee to the designation of the following Street Trading Pitches:

Street or part thereof to be considered:

- Cotton Court (Waring Street)
- Hill Street – All
- Commercial Court – All
- Writers' Square
- Donegall Quay – part thereof beside Lagan Lookout building for six pitches;
- Lanyon Place – part thereof under the covered walkway for six pitches.

Sister Cities International Conference 2009

Belfast has been successful in securing the Sister Cities International annual conference at the Waterfront Hall 27 July – 1 August 2009. This is the first time the event has been held outside of the United States and has the potential to make a contribution of at least £2.5million to the local economy. Delegates will mostly come from the USA with large groups also expected from Africa, China, Japan and Europe.

The bid has been supported by the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau, Tourism Ireland, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, the Northern Ireland Bureau in Washington DC, Armagh and Down Tourism Consortium, other Councils and the Regional Tourism Consortiums in Northern Ireland. An organising committee has been set up to manage the conference in Belfast which includes Belfast City Council, Armagh and Down Tourism, North Down Borough Council, Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau, Northern Ireland Tourist Board, US Consulate and Tourism Ireland.

Northern Ireland is required to host a reception on Friday 18 July 2008 at the International Sister Cities conference in Kansas City, Missouri, USA. This is the largest opportunity to market the Belfast Sister Cities International Conference 2009. Tourism Ireland has agreed to fund a substantial part of the budget and local Councils have been asked to assist. Belfast City Council has been asked to contribute a sum of £5,000. The event will also provide an opportunity to have promotional stands and literature to promote Belfast as a tourism destination. Details of the Kansas conference can be found at www.sister-cities.org

Belfast Tourism Monitor 2007

Members will be aware that the Belfast Tourism Monitor is an integrated monitoring and evaluation project carried out by Millward Brown Ulster, aimed at measuring the volume and value of tourism in Belfast on an annual basis. The importance of the data collated through the Tourism Monitor cannot be underestimated in terms of highlighting the economic impact and importance of tourism to the City's economy.

Millward Brown Ulster has informed the Tourism Development Unit that a final report in relation to the statistical data of the 2007 Tourism Monitor will be completed at the end of February 2008. A summary of the findings of the Belfast Tourism Monitor will be produced in a Facts and Figures booklet similar to previous years, for distribution to the tourism industry, arts and cultural sector, government agencies and further education establishments.

72 Hours in Belfast

Under the Cultural Tourism Strategy 'Developing Belfast's Opportunity' and accompanying Action Plan, the Tourism Development Unit has developed a number of cultural products which are designed to make specific areas of culture, heritage and leisure more easily accessible to visitors and leave them with a unique and positive experience. Supported by coordinated information and marketing, the new products have played a crucial role in developing cultural tourism. The '72 Hours in Belfast Cultural Guide' is the one-stop shop to experience the unique character of Belfast. It lists magnificent visitor attractions, award-winning restaurants, a range of superb hotels, tours, bars and clubs, shops, world-class theatres, galleries, live music and fabulous festivals throughout the year.

Following the success of 72 Hours, we have been unable to cope with demand and unable to maintain literature stock at key outlets including Belfast Welcome Centre and at the Airports. Although the guide is promoted through e-marketing and it is the number one download on Belfast City Council's website, visitors still require hard copies of literature when they are here. Approval is sought for an updated 72 hour guide and reprint of 30,000 copies .

Resource Implications

Sister Cities International Conference 2009
£5,000

Belfast Tourism Monitor 2007
£4,000

72 Hours in Belfast
£21,500

Recommendations

Street Trading

That Members approve the response to the Designation of Street Trading Pitches as detailed in **Appendix 1**.

Sister Cities International Conference 2009

It is recommended that Members approve funding of £5,000 to enable promotion of the Sister Cities International Conference.

Belfast Tourism Monitor 2007

It is recommended that a presentation on the 2007 findings of the Belfast Tourism Monitor be delivered to the Development Committee and that approval be granted for the production of the Tourism Facts and Figures booklet at a cost of no more than £4,000.

72 Hours in Belfast

It is recommended that the 72 Hours in Belfast Cultural Guide is updated and 30,000 copies reprinted at a cost of no more than £21,500

Key to Abbreviations

BCC - Belfast City Council
NITB - Northern Ireland Tourist Board
BVCB - Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

Documents Attached

Appendix 1: The Designation of Street Trading Pitches – Response from the Development Department

APPENDIX 1

The Designation of Street Trading Pitches Draft Response from the Development Committee

The Development Committee recommends the following sites be designated suitable locations for Street Trading under the 2001 Street Trading legislation.

CATHEDRAL QUARTER

Street or part thereof to be considered	Commodity or service in respect of which a proposal has been received	Proposed Days/ Hours of Trade
Cotton Court (Waring Street)	Arts, Crafts, Flowers, Books	Sunday 10am-7pm
Hill Street - All	Arts, Crafts, Flowers, Books	Sunday 10am-7pm
Commercial Court - All	Fine Art, Paintings, Photographs, Prints	Sunday 10am-7pm
Writers' Square	Arts, Crafts, Books	Sunday 10am-7pm

Street or part thereof to be considered

Belfast City Council's Cultural Tourism Strategy, 'Developing Belfast's Opportunity', details the aim to develop cultural tourism activity and enhance the quality of the visitor experience in the Cathedral Quarter. The Cathedral Quarter is the oldest and most distinctive area of Belfast. Designated a Conservation Area in 1990, in recent years the Quarter has taken on a pivotal role as the cultural heart of Belfast and is now home to over 50 arts organisations.

High quality Street Trading in the Cotton Court, Hill Street, Commercial Court and Writers' Square would:

- bring colour, vibrancy and generate much-needed footfall
- create awareness of the cultural offering in the Cathedral Quarter
- coordinate links between attractions and cultural organisations
- capture the essence of the Quarter and reflect its distinctiveness
- enhance the quality of the visitor experience
- attract new people to the Cathedral Quarter
- be a crucial asset to the competitive success of Belfast

It is recommended that licences for Cotton Court be restricted to two, to allow for continued programming of outdoor events and performances in this area. It is also recommended that further expansion to Writers' Square should only take place following successful and established Street Trading in Hill Street and Commercial Court.

Commodity or service in respect of which a proposal has been received

It is essential that any Street Trading within Cathedral Quarter reflects its distinctive character i.e. a designated conservation and cultural area. Cultural tourists now expect a unique offering of high quality indigenous products. It is crucial to adhere to this in order to compete with other European cities.

It would be extremely detrimental to the area if stalls selling mass produced products such as tourist souvenirs and memorabilia were to be facilitated and this would seriously compromise its unique character. Businesses surveyed were emphatic that a high quality be maintained.

Therefore it is recommended licenses be strictly confined to the following commodities and that restrictions and conditions be included:

Arts - visual arts of all disciplines such as fine art, print, photography
Crafts – such as jewellery, ceramics, sculpture, pottery, clothing,
Flowers and books.

NB: Products should be original, locally produced and hand-made by professional, indigenous artists and designers.

Any licence should include strict enforcement measures in terms of quality and appropriateness of merchandise and carefully managed in order to ensure a continued and sustained quality presentation. We would also recommend failure to utilise licence on four consecutive Sundays would result in loss of pitch.

Proposed Days / Hours of Trade

The Development Committee strongly recommends that Street Trading be restricted to Sundays only between 10.00am and 7.00pm in order to develop a unique attraction in Belfast. Members will be aware that the Cultural Tourism Strategy, 'Developing Belfast's Opportunity', outlines the need to develop the quality of the visitor experience in Belfast on Sundays and enhance and promote the current product offering. Feedback from our cultural tourism networking contacts has found that virtually all hotels reported a serious problem on Sundays, in particular Sunday mornings. It was pointed out that many guests leave Belfast on Sunday afternoons and that Sunday morning is their last period to enjoy Belfast. Members will also be aware that media coverage surrounding the Lonely Planet announcement in November 2006 commented on the need to develop the Sunday offer.

NB The Tourism Development Unit would support and complement Sunday Street Trading activity by:

- co-ordinating the hospitality sector (eg coffee shops and restaurants) to open during the proposed hours
- encouraging cultural organisations to programme regular indoor and outdoor events
- galleries to open on Sunday afternoons
- encouraging new Sunday walking tours
- market and promote the package in partnership with the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

The Development Committee further recommends the following sites be designated suitable locations for Street Trading. Sale of a high standard of beverages and confectionary would be useful public amenity.

It is recommended that restriction are applied and that trading should be in keeping with iconic buildings, public viewing platforms and public art in the area eg: "Tourist Gifts" should be defined in any licence and not include mass produced or imported products.

Street or part thereof to be considered	Commodity or service in respect of which a proposal has been received	Proposed Days/ Hours of Trade
Donegall Quay – part thereof beside Lagan lookout building for six pitches.	Hot & Cold Beverages, Confectionery, Tourist Gifts	Seasonal
Lanyon Place – part thereof under the covered walkway for six pitches.	Hot & Cold Beverages, Confectionery, Tourist Gifts	Seasonal