



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Tourism Development Update
Date:	9 April 2008
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Relevant Background Information

Conference Subvention

Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has a Conference Subvention policy which is utilised to secure and support national and international conferences to Belfast and to build the City's profile as a conference destination. One request has been received and the proposals have been assessed against the funding criteria and it meets the category for financial support.

International Computer Music Conference 25-29 August 2008: It is anticipated that the economic impact from this conference will be £236,300 and will create 1065 bed nights for BVCB members. This is the first time the conference will be held in Belfast and will be attended by both national and international delegates. Funding of £1,000 is recommended towards this conference.

Lagan Canal Workshop in Enniskillen: As part of the COMET Multi-annual Plan (2007 – 2013) for the Comet Region being submitted to SEUPB for Interreg IV funding, Belfast City Council as a COMET partner is currently developing a joint application with Donegal as a partner. The aim of the work is to facilitate the development of a cross-border tourism product based on the development of the Lagan Navigation.

Restoration of the Lagan Canal, along with the work already planned to restore the Ulster Canal, would provide a vital link from Belfast through to Lough Neagh the hub for the waterways of Northern Ireland and into the West including County Donegal.

Discussions have taken place with representatives from Donegal County Council and agreement has been reached to progress an application for funding to SEUPB. Details of the project are currently being developed and to progress this East – West navigation linkage a workshop is being organised for all relevant elected Members both in the COMET and Donegal areas to take place on a date to be finalised later this month. The relevant Ministers from both areas are also being invited to attend.

Nashville Sister City

Members will be aware that the Development Committee has led on supporting the Sister City link between Belfast and Nashville. The aim is to co-ordinate and agree identified areas of cultural, tourism and economic development between the two cities to better maximise our relationship with Nashville. At a meeting of the Nashville Advisory Group held on 24th January 2007, there was a desire to work in collaboration to enable the relationship between the two cities to be strengthened and a focus on achieving tangible outputs.

Resource Implications

International Computer Music Conference 2008

Total Budget £28,980; remaining budget £11,730
£1,000.

Lagan Canal Workshop

£600 total spend.

Nashville Sister City

£5,000.

Recommendations

Conference Subvention

It is recommended that, given that the economic impact is substantial and that the conference will assist in enhancing the image of Belfast as a conference destination on an international platform, funding of £1,000 is allocated to the International Computer Music Conference 25-29 August 2008.

Lagan Canal Workshop

It is recommended that the Chair and/or the Deputy Chair and any other interested Members of the Development Committee consider participation in a workshop at a date and time to be advised, to discuss the development of the East-West navigation linkage. The Interreg application for funding has already been approved by Committee as part of the COMET Multi-annual Plan.

Nashville Sister City

Approval is sought from Members to host an inward civic visit from the Mayor of Nashville Karl Dean and the former Mayor Bill Purcell. The purpose is to promote and highlight the Sister City Link and to attract visitors to Belfast at a cost not to exceed £5,000.