



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Tourism Unit Update
Date:	11 June 2008
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459 Pièr Morrow, Acting Tourism Development Manager, ext 3582

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 proposal has been assessed against the funding criteria and it meets the category for financial support as detailed below:

NI Gas Industry Conference 25-27 September 2008 - it is anticipated that the economic impact from this conference will be £168,360 and will create 1150 bed nights for BVCB members. Funding of £1,000 is recommended towards this conference since the economic impact is substantial and it will assist in enhancing the image of Belfast as a conference and leisure destination.

HARTE Project

At the Development Committee meeting of 16 January 2008, members were informed of the successful application for European Social Fund (ESF) funding to implement a training programme to help local unemployed people find work in the hospitality and retail sectors (HARTE project). Permission is sought from Members to seek tenders for delivery of the programme, in accordance with Belfast City Council procurement procedures.

In order to expedite the procurement process, members are requested to delegate authority to Director of Development, in consultation with the Chair of the Development Committee, to accept the most advantageous tender for the works, within the overall available budget.

Sister Cities International 2008 Kansas Conference

Members will be aware that 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.

The Sister Cities International Conference is being held in Kansas City, Missouri, USA on 16-19 July and permission is being sought for the Chair and Deputy Chair of Committee (or their nominees) and one officer to attend the conference, which will be an opportunity to encourage delegates to sign up for the conference in Belfast in 2009 during the conference as well as at the Northern Ireland reception which is being held on Friday 18 July 2008 at the conference. This is the largest opportunity to market the Belfast Sister Cities International Conference 2009 and is being supported by Tourism Ireland and other local Councils from Northern Ireland. Details of the Kansas conference can be found at www.sister-cities.org.

Resource Implications

Conference Subvention

NI Gas Industry Conference 25-27 September £1,000

Sister Cities International 2008 Kansas Conference 16 – 19 July 2008

Estimated costs (per attendee) for attendance at the Conference

Registration fees: £ 360 = \$ 625

Accommodation: £ 300

Flights: £ 1200 (Business Class £3000)

Subsistence: £ 360

Total per attendee travelling economy class £2200

Total per attendee travelling business class £4020

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 that funding of £1,000 is allocated to the NI Gas Industry Conference 25-27 September 2008.

HARTE Project

It is recommended that members approve the invitation to tender for the delivery of the HARTE programme and give delegated authority to the Director of Development, in consultation with the Chair of the Development Committee, to accept the most advantageous tender for the delivery of the HARTE programme, within the overall available budget.

Sister Cities International 2008 Kansas Conference

It is recommended that approval be given for the Chair and Deputy Chair of Committee or their nominees and one officer attend the SCI Conference in Kansas City, USA and associated expenditure for conference fee, travel, accommodation and subsistence.

In addition the Committee is requested to decide whether business class or economy class be used for the associated flights.

Key to Abbreviations

SCI – Sister Cities International

BLANK PAGE