



## Belfast City Council

**Report to:** Development Committee

**Subject:** Belfast Chamber of Trade & Commerce's Retail Campaign 2008

**Date:** 15 October 2008

**Reporting Officer:** Marie-Thérèse McGivern Director of Development ext.3470

**Contact Officer:** Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

### Relevant Background Information

The attached proposal has been received from Belfast Chamber of Trade & Commerce seeking Council support towards new festive lighting in the City Centre. The details of the retail campaign are also forwarded to the Committee for notation, given the high level of private sector support recently assembled in light of the economic downturn and fears of a poor Christmas trading period.

### Key Issues

At the Development Committee meeting in September, Members considered and approved a Retail Sector Support Plan for 2008/09. A range of initiatives under the Plan's themes of Marketing, Capacity Building and Product Development were approved in order to address the immediate issues facing retailers in Belfast. The emphasis of the Plan along with the balance of resources was orientated towards strengthening the independent retail sector.

John Moore, the new President of the Belfast Chamber of Commerce has been meeting a range of organisations recently to present his retail campaign for 2008. As explained in his attached letter (**Appendix 1**) the Belfast Chamber are investing £175,000 additional monies to drive footfall and animate the city centre in the period up to Christmas. The sum of £20,000 has been specifically requested from the Council towards new festive lighting.

The proposals contained within the attached campaign (**Appendix 1**) have been assessed and positively responded to by officers, pending Council consideration. The proposed response on behalf of Council is attached in **Appendix 2**.

A number of the Chamber's proposals are similar to initiatives already established by Council and should seek to build on our strong foundation of a partnership approach.

The Chamber has been updated on Council's current and past activity in this field including our work on the evening economy, city centre animation, cultural quarters and independent retail support. The focus of the Chamber's plan is on the period up to Christmas 08 although it is understood that an annual plan will be forthcoming from Chamber in future.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

£20,000 is requested for new festive lighting.

### **Recommendations**

To agree the recommended response to the Chamber's retail campaign plan and to approve £20,000 towards their festive lighting.

### **Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – Letter from John Moore and 'Feel the Beat of the City' Campaign  
Appendix 2 – Proposed Belfast City Council response