



APPENDIX 1

E137/08
17/09/2008



**Belfast Chamber of
Trade & Commerce**

Ms Shirley McCay
Head of Economic Initiatives
Development Department
Belfast City Council
4-12 Linenhall Street
Belfast BT2 8BP

16 September 2008.

Dear Shirley,

I believe that Andrew Irvine of BCCM has updated you on the progress that we are making with the Chamber's promotional campaign for Belfast, to be delivered between October and December 2008.

Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce is investing some £175,000 in this major effort to drive the city centre economy at a crucial and difficult time. I have enclosed a copy of our vision document, *'Driving the Heart of Belfast'*. The activities within the operational plan include marketing the city's retail offer to Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland audiences, a substantial programme of on-street animation, a number of special offer promotions including a 'meal deal' in some 20 restaurants, and £60,000 of new Festive Lights. It is with regard to the Festive Lighting element that I write this letter. The old 'Smiley Face' lighting features now must be replaced with new 'Belfast Brand' features. I understand that the Council would also be interested in lighting features similar to the 'Prague Angels'.

In considering all of the above I request, on behalf of Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, that Belfast City Council partner with us on this campaign by contributing £20,000 to the new Festive Lighting features required. If you require further information, or would like to discuss input into the design or procurement process, please do not hesitate to contact either Andrew Irvine or me.

Thanking you in anticipation of a positive response.

Yours sincerely,

John Moore
President

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VISION

DRIVING THE HEART OF BELFAST

'Feel the Beat of the City'
Campaign
2008



part of it

Economic Context Research

Key Statistics:

Total Jobs in Belfast: 192447 (30% of NI total)
Percentage of which is retail: 13% (25,018 jobs)
Percentage of which is hotels/restaurants: 6% (11547 jobs)
Number of retail outlets in the prime retail area: 834

Excerpt from *The Independent* – 20th April 2008

Shoppers beware. The credit crunch is claiming more retail casualties than at any time since the early-1990s' recession and experts warn there will be worse to come, spelling the end of the high street as we know it.

As the UK's debt-fuelled spending splurge fizzles out, doors are slamming shut for the last time at chains as far apart as Mexx, the US-owned fashion retailer, and Ethel Austin, purveyor of value womenswear,

Since January, 11 mostly midsize chains, selling anything from books and bedding to menswear, have fallen into administration. JJB Sports, the camera sellers Jessops and Blacks Leisure, the outdoor specialist, are all shutting swathes of their estates and others – notably DSG, the group behind Currys and PC World – are working on closure programmes.

Even high street titans share the pain: Sir Philip Green, the billionaire owner of Topshop and BHS, recently admitted that "nobody is being excluded" from "a market that is probably as tough as I've seen it". And Sir Stuart Rose, Marks & Spencer's chief executive, has said the slowdown could last until 2010.

A quarter of all retailers listed on the stock market issued negative trading updates, or profit warnings, in the first quarter of the year, according to accountants Grant Thornton. And March saw the worst underlying sales performance from the UK high street for nearly three years, according to the British Retail Consortium.

"The most visible sign of a slowdown will be retailers feeling the heat. This is very much a consumer-led affair," said Richard Boys-Stones, retail restructuring partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Vince Prior, who heads the retail advisory team at the property group Jones Lang LaSalle, said: "The first quarter was especially tough coming after a bad Christmas. I expect to see the list of retailers going into administration grow."

Conclusions:

The prevailing economic climate represents a very real threat to businesses. While it holds few electoral votes, the city centre is the main provider of employment for constituents and therefore the impact of the 'credit crunch' on the retail core is a very real concern for Councillors. It is vital that we take pro-active steps to protect businesses and jobs, hence the '*Feel the Beat of the City*' campaign.

OBJECTIVE

**INCREASE FOOTFALL IN BELFAST DURING THE CURRENT CREDIT
CRUNCH AND BEYOND.**

HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO IT!

1. Get a message out across the province and beyond
“That Belfast has a new heart” (see plan)
2. Attract more consumers into Belfast City Centre by Train, Bus, Boat, Plane
and Car
3. Encourage Networking between Castle Court, Donegall Place, and the New
Victoria Square.
4. Encourage all City Centre Stakeholders Public and Private sector to overcome
bureaucracy for this one off dilemma facing all within the Private sector.
This operation has to be swiftly formulated and implemented with everyone
playing their part and singing off the one hymn sheet.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITY PRE CHRISTMAS 08

1. Advertise the key aspects of the day time economy incorporating the evening economy co-operating with BVCB.
2. Serious of offers in conjunction with local newspapers eg meal deal Wednesdays and Fridays before 7pm, small glass of wine with main course £5.
3. In conjunction with Translink's 60+ offer from October 1 develop instore and city centre offers for this large segment of the community.
4. Wheel deal. Encourage BCTC members to buy into this voucher scheme linked to purchases

LOCAL ARTS

1. Encourage young musicians to play their musical instruments in the city centre by offering a "busking competition" at key locations and at key times of the day and evening.
2. Launch Taxi Driver of the year competition with given criteria to include dress manners knowledge of current affairs and driver competence.
3. Develop strategic partnership with Translink to include –
 - Evening economy family offers.
 - Improve frequency of transport during roll out of 60+ promotions
 - Encourage Translink to offer better frequency for Saturdays and especially Sundays commencing October 1.
 - Build upon marketing relationship with Tran slink by encouraging members to use this channel of advertising.
 - In conjunction with Tran slink and the private sector launch commencing Jan 09 the bus/train driver of the year competition. (Criteria along similar lines to Taxi Driver of the year).

FESTIVE LIGHTING

- Purchase additional city centre festive lightning and where necessary renew old style logo lightning replaced by the new heart logo.

CAR PARKING CHARGES IN THE CITY CENTRE v FREE PARKING AT SHOPPING CENTRES

- This burning issue counteracts all keeps manifesting itself and counteracts efforts by the City Centre Private Sector by discouraging this type of visitor in favour of the out of town shopping centre.
- All efforts by DRD should be made to ease policy during this period of credit crunch especially Friday to Sunday.

CLEANSING OF THE CITY CENTRE

- BCC to be encouraged to review the cleansing process of the City Centre especially at weekends to combat the double edged sword effect of the good work by BVCB in attracting greater numbers of visitors who bring with them greater amounts of litter.