

APPENDIX 1

Council-generated media coverage

From September 2008 – November 2008, 42 press releases were issued in relation to the work of the Department. A summary of some of the coverage is outlined below:

The council's events programme continued to attract major media attention with extensive coverage on both the lead up to, and taking place of, the 'Halloween Fireworks Extravaganza' and 'Christmas Lights Switch-On', as a result of a steady flow of releases. Other events that generated good media interest included the 'Proms in the Park' and the first ever 'Fashion and Retail Awards'.

The council's support for major sporting events in the city generated significant coverage with the launch of, and promotional releases, on the '2009 Belfast Marathon', the '11th Annual Ulster Open Wheelchair Tennis Tournament' and news that Belfast will host the 'European Pipe Band Championships', for the next three years.

A number of tourism-related initiatives attracted positive media attention during this period including the 'Late Night Art' project, involving the late night opening of the city's art galleries on the first Thursday of each month. A new addition to the programme was a guided coach tour of the various galleries, organised to facilitate local journalists. The first ever 'Evening Economy Conference' also took place at Belfast Waterfront and attracted significant media interest.

The European Unit's flagship 'Opportunity Europe' event at St. George's Market received widespread media publicity from the daily and weekly newspapers across Northern Ireland. For the first time in its five year history, we organised a new media campaign involving the council working in partnership with the Belfast Telegraph to promote a schools' short story competition. The competition winners then had their reports on the event published in the paper's Education Supplement, which generated further media coverage on 'Opportunity Europe'. The European Unit's 'Belfast Children's Art bound for Finland' project was also well received by the press.

On the Culture and Arts front, the unveiling of the design and artist of the Broadway Art sculpture generated substantial press coverage from the broadcast and print media. A site visit was organised for the media giving them the opportunity to interview Councillors about the project.

The Ulster Hall was pro-actively promoted through releases on a planned exhibition where local people can share their memories of the Ulster Hall, and, news that Jackson Browne will be one of the first music artists to perform at the building when it opens in March 2009.

St. George's Market was in the media spotlight with its 'Cheese Etc' and 'Market Fusion' events and news of its popularity as a venue for concerts – with seven major concerts scheduled up until Christmas. The Continental Market also attracted significant press coverage with numerous media requests to do interviews about the venue.

A number of economic development programmes were also profiled by the business news desks including the 'Retail Therapy Programme', the 'Franchise Your Business Programme' and the 'Strategy in Business Initiative'. The Retail Therapy Programme, for instance, targeted the business media as well as the local weekly papers in Belfast. A press release and a business profile were issued about individual businesses from areas across Belfast targeting the appropriate weekly newspaper to attract more media coverage.

The 'Re-imagining Communities' programme attracted significant media attention with broadcast and print reports generated through releases about the news that ten murals were to be given a 'makeover'. A release was also issued about transforming wasteland in east Belfast, used as a bonfire site, into a community garden.

The Renewing the Routes programme also saw the Belfast weekly papers being targeted for maximum media coverage in the area the newspaper represented. Designated journalists were invited along to be given a special briefing on the programme as well as to interview Councillors.

Statistics

From September 2008 to November 2008, the Media Relations office dealt with 450 press enquiries – 119 of which were directly related to the work of the Department. This represents just over a quarter (26.4%) of the total number of enquiries dealt with by the Media Relations Team for the same period.