

Extract from minutes of –

## DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

10th DECEMBER, 2008

### “Economic Development

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### ‘Relevant Background Information

##### World Trade Centre Belfast Business Plan

Belfast City Council acquired the World Trade Centre Belfast licence in 2002 in partnership with Multi Development. In 2007, the Council purchased back Multi Development’s 50% of the licence. Since the appointment of the WTC Officer in March 2007, work has been undertaken to develop WTC Belfast activities. This has included a WTC Belfast Export Excellence Seminar Series for local companies this year as well as managing inward investment activities. To determine the longer term plans for WTC Belfast services, a business plan has been developed.

#### Key Issues

##### World Trade Centre Belfast

The strategies outlined by Programme for Government, DETI and Invest NI emphasise the need to support more companies to become exporters. Invest NI currently supports approximately only 5% of local companies and one of their priorities is to attract more client companies. The WTC business plan highlights the trade barriers and needs of local companies, the current assistance available and gaps in provision which WTC Belfast can fill. The business plan also details the commercial opportunities for WTC Belfast to secure income in order to secure the sustainability and growth of the service activities.

It proposes the following services:

- WTC Belfast Membership – target of 200 member companies established
- WTC Global Skills Workshops – introducing companies to the practicalities of trading internationally
- WTC Belfast Trade Missions – linking in with current providers (NICCI, Invest NI), we will undertake a small number of trade missions to target markets

- **WTC Global Supply Chain Management Programmes – helping companies improve their global supply chain management by looking at how they buy, sell or make products internationally**
- **WTC Belfast Local Networking Events – series of breakfast events on key topics of interest to local businesses**
- **WTC Belfast Investor Gateway Service – promoting Belfast as a city in which to invest and do business, linking with the key public and private sector agencies that can support potential investors.**

**WTC Belfast will adopt the following principles in terms of service delivery:**

- **Commercial approach: Services will be charged and income generated**
- **Regional approach: Membership and services will be offered to companies both regionally and internationally in cases where income can be generated or potential investment can be brought to the City. A regional approach also serves to attract co-funding for projects delivered on behalf of other organisations such as Invest NI. Participation costs by companies located outside of Belfast will be higher than those for Belfast businesses.**
- **Partnership approach: WTC Belfast will work in partnership with other local delivery organisations as well as the wider WTC network.**

**Further details on the proposed activities can be found on Modern.gov.**

### **Resource Implications**

#### **World Trade Centre Belfast**

**The cost to deliver the identified services for the period January 2009 – March 2010 will be £160,000. The budget for operations in the financial year 2008-2009 (£60,000) was approved as part of the Departmental Plan in May 2008; £100,000 will be required for the financial year 2009-2010. An application was submitted to DETI for 50% funding for WTC Belfast activities for this period and this has been approved. Invest NI have also agreed to co-fund the first WTC Belfast trade mission to Doha, Qatar. Further opportunities for private sector sponsorship will be explored.**

**Recommendations**

**It is recommended that Members:**

- **Agree the proposed activities to be delivered as part of the World Trade Centre Belfast activity plan for the period 2009-2010 and approve a budget of £100,000 for activities to be undertaken in the financial year 2009-2010**

**Key to Abbreviations**

**WTC – World Trade Centre'**

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt the recommendations contained within the report."

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