



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Sister Cities International Conference 29 July to 1 August 2009
Date:	11 March 2009
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 3585

Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the Tourism Unit brings regular update reports to Committee. The purpose of this report is to advise Members of:

Conference Subvention

Sister Cities International Conference 29 July to 1 August 2009

Key Issues

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.

Belfast has been successful in securing the Sister Cities International (SCI) Annual Conference at the Waterfront Hall and Europa Hotel from 29 July to 1 August 2009. This is the first time the event has been held outside the United States and has the potential to make a contribution of at least £2.5 million 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 (BVCB), 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, BVCB, Northern Ireland Tourist Board, US Consulate and Tourism Ireland.

A request has been received from the SCI Conference Committee and the proposal has been assessed against the funding criteria and it meets the category for financial support as it is anticipated that the economic impact from this conference will be at least £2.5 million and will create 4,500 bed nights for BVCB members.

The contribution by Council will assist with a range of support functions including the provision of conference technical support including weblab, marketing of the Conference in NI, ROI & Europe to recruit delegates, provision of delegate conference materials, volunteers and volunteer co-ordinator and signage.

Resource Implications

Financial
Conference subvention of £23,000.

Recommendations

It is recommended that subvention of £23,000 is allocated to this request since the economic impact is very significant at £2.5 million and it will assist in enhancing the image of Belfast as a major conference destination.

Abbreviations

SCI – Sister Cities International
BVCB – Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau