



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Waterfront and Ulster Halls Marketing Services Contract
Date:	20 April 2009
Reporting Officer:	Marie-Thérèse McGivern Director of Development ext. 3470
Contact Officer:	Mr Tim Husbands, Head of City Events and Venues ext 1400

Relevant Background Information

In May 2006 a contract for the provision of marketing services to the Belfast Waterfront was awarded for an initial one year period, further renewable for a maximum of two additional years. This option was taken up. The contract is now due to expire on 30 April 2009.

With the reopening of the Ulster Hall, and the strategy of joint promotion adopted for the two venues, a new contract arrangement is now required to cover marketing activities for both venues.

Furthermore, with recent changes in the Council's Branding Strategy and the expansion of the role of Corporate Communications, particularly in the field of advertising, there is a need to reassess the services required from a contractor.

Key Issues

In order to progress the appointment of a new contractor, yet retain a relationship with the existing contractor in the interim period, the following course of action is proposed.

1. Extension of the current contract for Belfast Waterfront Hall

Extension of the current contract to cover the period up to 30 June 2009 would allow advertising and other promotional activity to continue, pending the appointment of a new contractor.

As a new listings guide (the main element of expenditure) will not be required until August 2009 this is likely to involve only minimal work.

2. Ulster Hall

A large proportion of the design and advertising work required for the reopening of the Ulster Hall was carried out by the contractor appointed to design the interpretive displays within the venue.

Some additional work was also awarded to this designer in order to retain continuity of design.

It is proposed that this arrangement should continue until a new contractor is appointed.

3. Appointment of New Contractor for the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls

Approval is sought from Committee to seek tenders using the criteria detailed below. Approval is also sought from Committee for delegated authority for the Director of Development to award the tender in line with the criteria.

The new Marketing Services contract should relate to both Belfast Waterfront and the Ulster Hall.

There will be some substantive changes from the previous contract, notably:

- The opportunity to address how the Waterfront and Ulster Hall 'brands' work together;
- A requirement to address the Belfast brand in all design work;
- A reduction in the advertising brief for the contractor – design of advertising will remain within this brief, whereas the negotiation of advertising rates and placing of advertising will revert to Belfast City Council;
- A requirement to consider the implications of all marketing activity in relation to digital marketing opportunities and to work with Belfast City Council to ensure this is carried through.

The core work covered by the contract will involve:

- Design (and print management) of a listings guide for both venues;
- Design of corporate advertising (conference and entertainments markets) for each venue individually but also together
- Design of event related advertising for relevant entertainments events

Evaluation of the tenders received will be based on the following criteria:

- Cost
- Design Concepts
- Technical capability, including relevant experience
- Commitment (past and current customers' perceptions of service provided on similar completed contracts)
- Understanding of the markets served, i.e. entertainments / conferences and meetings
- Budget management proposals
- Percentage mark-up on third party costs
- Financial capability and standing
- Environmental management/impact

Resource Implications

Financial

As part of the operating budget for the Waterfront and Ulster Hall a budget for design and marketing work has been set at £35,000 per annum. Tender submissions will be assessed as to how they address this budget.

Recommendations

Committee approval is sought:

1. That Committee note the contents of the report
2. To seek tenders using the criteria detailed in the report.
3. That Committee approve the proposed plan of action in the appointment of a new contractor.
4. For delegated authority for the Director of Development to award the tender in line with the criteria.

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