

APPENDIX 1

Council generated media coverage

From December 2008 – February 2009, 35 press releases were issued in relation to the work of the Department. A summary of some of the coverage is outlined below.

Economic development initiatives were highly profiled, with positive publicity generated for the 'Big Breakfast' event organised by the World Trade Centre, the Sales Growth Programme, the Retail Therapy Programme and support for the Lisburn Road traders' map. Business guru Geoff Burch's visit to Belfast to host a Retail Masterclass for local independent retailers and for the launch of the HARTE programme, both organised through the Economic Development Unit, led to significant media interest and coverage from both the print and broadcast media as well as the online media.

The 'Renewing the Routes' programme continues to benefit from positive coverage. The restoration work at the Clifton Street Orange Hall and the lighting scheme at the Falls Road library both were highly profiled on local television and in the print media during the period.

The council's events programme continued to attract major media attention. The Christmas programme, the Continental Market at the City Hall, and the New Year's Eve all received significant coverage, as did the announcement in connection with the forthcoming St Patrick's Day carnival and concert. There was considerable coverage around the subsequent decision to withdraw funding from future New Year's Eve events.

The council's support for major sporting events in the city also generated much positive coverage. The main event during the period was the Irish Indoor Athletics Championships, which garnered substantial local, national and international media attention. The 'Between The Bridges' event to mark the completion of the Westlink upgrade, also continues to generate much positive publicity, as does the council's ongoing support for the forthcoming Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon.

The reopening of the Ulster Hall has started to attract a great deal of positive media coverage, with attention focusing on the opening night concert and the first month's programming (including the associated fringe festival). The Corporate Communications Unit is continuing to work closely with the Ulster Hall management to maximise positive publicity for the reopening, particularly in light of the launch of the 'Belfast 2009' initiative at the end of February.

In relation to culture, arts and tourism initiatives, the launch of the 'Town Book of Belfast' received considerable media attention, not just in Belfast but across Northern Ireland as a whole, while the relaunch of the Late Night Art tours and the council's support for the 'Out To Lunch' festival, the Nashville Songwriters Festival, the new Belfast Music exhibition and the Belfast Book Festival also were highlighted. Council support for 'UnConvention Belfast', which targeted musicians and groups involved in the Northern Ireland music industry, was also positively profiled in the local media.

The work of the North Foreshore Unit and the launch of its first major project at Giant's Park – a new landfill gas-powered electricity generating facility – generated substantial media coverage from the broadcast, print and online media – locally, regionally as well as nationally. A site visit was organised for journalists to interview the Lord Mayor and partners involved in the project. A land rover was also laid on for the broadcast media and press photographers to travel around the site and film/shoot at various locations as well as to facilitate 'live' recordings with the electricity generating facility in the background.

Other media coverage

The launch of the 'Belfast 2009' initiative at the end of February attracted much positive media coverage, which resulted in a positive knock-on effect for the department in relation to its work in the fields of economic development, tourism, culture and arts, urban regeneration and the Ulster Hall, as noted above.

The popularity of St. George's Market as a venue for events, and especially concerts, generated much positive publicity over the Christmas period, and again at the end of February, when the 'Spring Into Fashion' event was launched and details of the first concerts in 2009 were also announced.