



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Tourism Update
Date:	11 November 2009
Reporting Officer:	Shirley McCay/Tim Husbands, Interim Co-Directors of Development
Contact Officer:	Kerrie Sweeney, Tourism Culture & Arts Manager, ext 3586

Key Issues

1. Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau – Presentation to Development Committee
2. Cathedral Quarter Steering Group – Presentation to Development Committee
3. Arts Council of Northern Ireland – Special Development Committee Meeting

1. Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau – Presentation to Development Committee
Members will be aware that the Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau (BVCB) was established in 1999 to promote Belfast as a major leisure and business tourism destination. Their Mission Statement is:

"to establish Belfast as a world class visitor destination by increasing the contribution that tourism makes to the economy in a way that is customer-focused, delivers a quality solution in a cost-effective way, respects the environment, is acceptable to the local community and offers sustainable growth."

BVCB is currently delivering its business plan for the 2009/2010 financial year and are working on an outline business plan for 2010/2011. BVCB have requested an opportunity to present at a meeting of the Development Committee details of current activities, achievements and draft proposals for the year ahead.

Resource Implications:

There are no resource implications.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Committee receive a presentation from the BVCB at a future meeting.

Decision Tracker

Following approval that the BCVB be invited to make a presentation to Committee

Timeline: January 2010

Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney

2. Cathedral Quarter Steering Group – Presentation to Development Committee

Members will be aware that Laganside Corporation was dissolved in July 2007. In 2008 the Department for Social Development (DSD), working closely with Belfast City Council, Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) and key stakeholders, set up a Steering Group to develop and implement a 5 year Strategic Vision and Development Plan for the area. DSD committed funding to enable the Steering Group to produce the strategy and promote the area including the employment of a Cathedral Quarter Development Manager. The Cathedral Quarter Steering Group (CQSG) includes broad representation of arts, business, leisure, public sector and other stakeholders - please see Appendix 1 for details.

Members will be aware that the Cultural Tourism Strategy, 'Developing Belfast's Opportunity', details the aim to develop cultural tourism activity in the Cathedral Quarter. Belfast City Council have been actively involved in the development and promotion of the Cathedral Quarter as a cultural tourism destination through;

- infrastructure development in its support of venues such as the MAC, Black Box, Galleries and the Oh Yeah Music Centre
- improving visitor servicing between the hospitality and cultural sectors through skills development workshops and familiarisation tours
- working collaboratively to enhance the quality of the visitor experience in the Quarter and development of branding
- promotion in partnership with BVCB and improving communication through initiatives such as www.thecathedralquarter.com
- the development of new cultural products such as Late Night Art, Music Tourism, Summer Sundays, Support Culture Night and the development of future Cathedral Quarter Street Trading.

The Chair of the CQSG, Paul McErlane, and Cathedral Quarter Manager, Patricia Freedman, have requested an opportunity to present, at a meeting of the Development Committee early in the New Year, an overview of the draft 5 year Strategic Vision and Development Plan for the Cathedral Quarter. Please see Appendix 1 for further details. The CQSG have also written to the Council inviting the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Development Committee (or to nominate two Members as the Committee sees fit) to sit on the CQSG. Please see Appendix 2 for further details.

Resource Implications

There are no resource implications.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that Committee receive a presentation from the Chair of the Cathedral Quarter Steering Group and the Cathedral Quarter Manager
2. That Committee consider the invitation for the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman or their nominees to sit on the GQSG.

Decision Tracker:

1. Further to approval that the Chair of the CQSG and the Cathedral Quarter Manager make a presentation to Committee

Time line: January 2010 Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney

2. Further to agreement that the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman or their nominees agree to sit on the CQSG

Time line: February 2010 Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney

3. Arts Council of Northern Ireland – Special Development Committee Meeting

The Arts Council is the lead development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland and offers a range of funding opportunities through the Exchequer and National Lottery funds. Its vision is to place the arts at the heart of Northern Ireland's social, economic and creative life. Providing a joined-up approach to the arts will be of paramount importance, given that the Review of Public Administration will change the landscape and culture of public services in Northern Ireland.

Following a meeting between the Chairman of the Development Committee, Councillor William Humphrey, and the Chair of the Arts Council, Rosemary Kelly, permission is sought for the Committee to receive a presentation from the Arts Council at a Special Meeting of the Development Committee. The presentation is timely given that the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit's Intergrated Cultural Strategy is nearing completion and consideration needs to be given to:

- Gain a greater understanding of the Arts Council's contribution to Belfast's Culture and Arts Sector, with a particular emphasis on promoting the value of the arts; strengthening the arts; growing audiences; and improving organisational performance
- Determine the Arts Council's future priorities for arts development in Belfast
- Establish a collaborative and integrated approach towards new opportunities

Resource Implications:

There are no resource implications.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee agree to a Special Committee Meeting to receive a presentation from the Arts Council of NI.

Decision Tracker:

Further to approval that the ACNI attend a Special Committee meeting to deliver a presentation.

Time line: February 2010

Reporting Officer: Kerry Sweeney

Documents Attached

Appendix 1. Details on the Cathedral Quarter Steering Group

Appendix 2. Details on the nomination of Committee Members to the CQSG

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