Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast City Centre Management Company Presentation
Date:	9 December 2009
Reporting Officer:	Shirley McCay, Acting Director of Development, ext 3459
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Relevant Background Information

At a meeting of the Development Committee on 16 January 2008, Members agreed to core fund Belfast City Centre Management Company (BCCM) £190,000 per year for two years commencing April 2008.

Key Issues

The work of BCCM covers three areas:

− Delivering BCCM city centre services
  BCCM delivers its own services, which add value to the city centre, examples include - City Centre Representatives, Café Culture Operating Agreements, City Beat Policing, Radio link, City Safe Crimewatch scheme and City Dressing, including the city's Festive Lighting

− Facilitating and assisting in the delivery of funders' City Centre Initiatives
  BCCM work 'on the street' (when requested and as directed) to assist with initiatives such as the Belfast Business Awards, Evening Economy, Independent Retail Support, City Centre Performance Measurement, Belfast in Bloom, Waste Management, Streets Ahead and the reStore initiative.

− Direct liaison with City Centre Businesses
  BCCM provide strong communication links between the private sector businesses in the city centre and central and local government, leading to increased private sector funding of city centre initiatives and marketing.

April 2008 to March 2010

The BCCM Board has indicated to the Chair and Deputy Chair of Committee, appreciation of Council's funding of £190,000 per annum during the financial years 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.

BCCM report that these have been two very successful years, with the company's business plans being delivered in full, save only a few projects which are delayed due to circumstances beyond the control of BCCM.

Copies of the BCCM Performance Reports for 2008/2009 and the first three quarters of 2009/2010 are contained in Appendix 1a and 1b. It is particularly noteworthy that during these two years BCCM has been able to use its core funding to leverage increased funding for specific city centre projects from other sources, increasing from £381,000 in 2007/2008 to:

- £710,000 in 2008/2009
- £590,000 in 2009/2010 (budgeted)

The above figures include:
- A substantial rise in funding obtained from retailers towards Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau's (BVCB) marketing campaign for the city, rising from a previous annual high of £15,000, to £50,000 per annum in both of these two years.
- £60,000 investment in new festive lights for the city provided by Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce

Members are also asked to note that during these two funding years BCCM has successfully engaged with issues which were not originally tabled in their business plans, these include:

- Bringing together the three membership organisations for public hire taxi drivers in the city into one forum, and agreeing a 'Taxi Forum Agenda' which is now being progressed with DoE and DRD Roads Service. This has led to a positive working relationship with the drivers. Early benefits included a marshaled and 'agreed fare' taxi service to the Tall Ships event.

- Chairing the work of Orangefest and Belfast Chamber of Trade & Commerce in respect to delivering shop opening, city dressing and on-street animation Delivery of the high profile Retail NI 2009 conference on behalf of Belfast Chamber of Trade & Commerce, which reinforced Belfast as Northern Ireland's primary shopping destination and successfully highlighted the private sectors strong feelings regarding the 'Town Centre First' lobby with Northern Ireland Executive Ministers.

- Under the Chamber's new President, harnessing some £100,000 each year towards a Belfast Chamber of Trade & Commerce Promotional Campaign.

- At Council's request, provision of support to retailers in other areas of the city to deliver local Festive Lighting projects.

Appendix 2 contains a draft Business Plan for the period 2010 to 2013, which includes a detailed action plan for the first year, 2010/2011. The BCCM Board wish to consider any recommendations or requests from the Development Committee before finalising and publishing this Business Plan.

The BCCM Board recognize and state within the Business Plan that the plan may need to be reviewed with core funders after the implementation of the Review of Public Administration.

The Business Plan sets specific performance targets for each of BCCM's 'Activity Groups' of:

1. Urban Management
2. Safer City
3. Character & Style
4. Economic Activity.

The attention of Members is drawn to the strategic objectives set-out in section 6 of the plan, and the specific targets set-out in the 2010/2011 Action Plan. The Business Plan includes financial projections, and the BCCM Board is not seeking any rise in funding from Council.

Resource Implications

Belfast City Centre Management Company is seeking confirmation of £190,000 per annum core funding for two years, to be reviewed annually, commencing April 2010.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note the details of the BCCM Performance Reports for work to date and the Business Plan for 2010-2013.

It is further recommended that committee approve annual funding for BCCM of £190,000 per year for two years, subject to annual review, commencing April 2010 and subject to activities and targets being met.

Documents Attached

Appendix 1a - BCCM Performance Report for 2008/2009
Appendix 1b - BCCM Performance Reports for first three quarters of 2009/2010
Appendix 2 - Draft Business Plan for the period 2010 to 2013

Decision Tracking

Subject to Committee approval of the recommendation to fund BCCM, an appropriate legal agreement will be drawn up between BCCM and BCC to allow for monitoring and allocation of funding.

Timeline: April 2010   Reporting Officer: Lisa Toland

Key to Abbreviations

BCCM – Belfast City Centre Management
BVCB – Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau
DoE- Department of the Environment
DRD- Department for Regional Development

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