



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Presentation by Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau of Draft Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan 2010 to 2013
Date:	13 January 2010
Reporting Officer:	Shirley McCay, Acting Director of Development, ext 3459
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Relevant Background Information

At the November Development Committee Members agreed to receive a presentation from the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau on its draft Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan and to consider the Bureau's application for funding. Appendix 1 includes a copy of the draft Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan 20010-2013.

Established in 1999, BVCB is the tourism marketing and visitor servicing organisation for the Belfast City Region, with responsibility for:

- Attracting tourism visitors, bed nights and revenue to the Belfast region;
- Fulfilling an essential tourism gateway role for the rest of Northern Ireland;
- Providing a visitor servicing function, through the operation of the Belfast Welcome Centre, Belfast International Airport TIC and George Best Belfast City Airport TIC.

BVCB is a public/private sector partnership funded by Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Tourist Board as well as its 490 private sector members.

Tourism in Belfast continues to be a success with BVCB contributing significantly, as highlighted below;

- £7.1 million visitors came to the City in 2008, an increase of 3% on the previous year contributing £437 million to the local economy and helping to support nearly 25,000 full time equivalent jobs.
- While 2009 figures are not yet published, all indications are that the results will remain positive, boosted by 800,000 visitors to the highly successful Tall Ships event and the surge in city breaks and shopping trips from ROI and Europe.
- In 2009, Belfast secured 36 cruise ships, equating to over 57,000 passengers and crew visiting and £15 million to the Belfast and Northern Ireland economy.

- In 2008, BVCB secured 34 conference wins equating to over 10,000 delegates and expected to generate £11.5 million for the local economy (it is estimated that Belfast hosted 63 conferences, generating 34,000 bed nights and £13 million for the economy).
- In 2008 annual hotel occupancy in Belfast was 70% against a Northern Ireland average of 63%.
- Belfast was the only UK/Ireland city featured in Frommer's top 12 Guide, voted as the 3rd most favourite UK City/Short break destination in the 2009 Guardian/Observer Travel Awards, the UK City of the Future in the FDI Magazine, was noted in the Lonely Planet as one of the top ten cities on the rise and Best Conference Destination in the Business Britain Magazine.
- During 2008/09 the three Belfast TICs handles a total of 540,455 enquiries, equating to 57% of all enquiries handled by the Northern Ireland TIC network. Ticket sales at the BWC for tours and events were up 72%.
- Over 300 international press visits were hosted and generated over £4million advert equivalent and almost 600 trade agents were welcomed to the city.

Key Issues

Members are aware that the Council and NITB have been working on an Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework for Belfast, agreeing in December 2009 to hold a special meeting to be updated on the final draft. BVCB has been part of this process and their three year Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan complements and builds on this work.

The Council's Tourism Strategy overall projections are to increase;

- the number of overnight visitors by 23% to 2,016,696 by 2011
- total visitors by 12% to 8,178,000 by 2011
- revenue from overnight visitors by 12% to £314 million by 2011
- increase in visitor spend of 11% to £470million by 2011

BVCB has set a number of key performance indicators which form part of their 2010/2011 operating plan as follows.

2010/2011 Targets

Leisure Tourism

Attract cruise ships to Belfast	39 cruise ships 60,000 passengers and crew £15 million
Implement above the line campaigns	45,000 additional PHV from carrier campaigns generating £8.4million spend 50,000 additional ROI city breaks from partner campaigns generating £10.7million spend

Business Tourism

Maintain the volume and value of conferences secured by BVCB	Win conferences attracting 17,000 delegates £9.9 million spend
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Communications

Implement the communications plans to deliver PR in main NI, ROI, and GB	120 trips with 300 press £3.5 million advert equivalent
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markets	120 m WOTS
<u>Visitor Servicing</u>	
Maintain current levels of enquiries and throughput at the three TICs	552,841 enquiries 415,606 throughput £27 million

Whilst the recession remains a challenge for tourism, BVCB in response will;

- concentrate on closer to home markets and short breaks
- promote the benefit of the exchange rates by targeting Euro markets
- maintain Belfast's share of international conference market
- maintain Belfast's profile and success as an emerging cruise destination.

Members will be aware that the Bureau undertakes additional activity including the promotion of the Council's Events Programme through a marketing campaign aimed at the domestic market. Furthermore the 'Whatabout' guide is produced to indicate up to date and accurate information on the events, entertainment and what's on programme for the City.

Financial support is being requested from the Development Committee to support the marketing and visitor servicing activities of the Bureau in 2010/2011:

Marketing and Communications	£1,141,300
Belfast Welcome Centre	£479,465
Airport TIC's	£50,000
Domestic marketing and 'Whatabout' guide	£208,060
TOTAL	£1,878,825

The achievement of the Bureau's objectives will be monitored by the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit through the Belfast Tourism Monitor and the establishment of appropriate performance measurements/indicators measured through regular reporting to be agreed with BVCB's Chief Executive.

Resource Implications

BVCB is seeking £1,865,465 for 2010/2011 which is the same level as 2009/2010 with no % increase.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members approve:

- BVCB's Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan and
- BCC's contribution at the same level as 2009/2010, £1,865,465.

Decision Tracking

BVCB will produce quarterly reports against performance measures and indicators.

Timeframe: 30 June 2010, 30 September 2010, 31 December 2010, 31 March 2011

Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney

Key to Abbreviations

BVCB – Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau

PHV – Pure Holiday Visitors

WOTS – Weighted Opportunity To See

TICs – Tourist Information Centres

BWC – Belfast Welcome Centre

BIA TIC – Belfast International Airport Tourist Information Centre

GBBCA TIC – George Best Belfast City Airport Tourist Information Centre

NITB – Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - BVCB Marketing and Visitor Servicing Plan 2010 – 2013