



## Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Conference Subvention
Date:	10 March 2010
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470 Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459
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### **Relevant Background Information**

#### Conference Subvention

Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has a Conference Subvention policy which is utilised to secure and support national and international conferences to Belfast and to build the City's profile as a conference destination. A number of requests have been received and the proposals have been assessed against the funding criteria.

#### Aggression – From Fantasy to Action Conference

This is the second occasion the Centre for Psychotherapy and the Northern Ireland Division of the Royal College of Psychiatrists have brought this conference to Belfast. The conference will be taking place in the City from 5 – 7 May 2010, and organisers have indicated that it would attract approximately 400 delegates, staying for two nights. It is anticipated that the economic impact from this conference will be £165,000 and will create 800 bed nights for BVCB members. Funding of £1000 is recommended towards this conference since the economic impact is substantial and will assist in enhancing the image of Belfast as a conference and leisure destination.

#### Private Equity Conference 2010

This is the fourth occasion that InterTradelreland has brought this conference to Belfast. The conference will be taking place in the City on the 26 May 2010, and organisers have indicated that it would attract approximately 290 delegates. It is anticipated that the economic impact from this conference will be £114,775 and will create 248 bed nights for BVCB members. Funding of £500 is recommended towards this conference since the economic impact is substantial and will assist in enhancing the image of Belfast as a conference and leisure destination.

#### The Ulster Society of Magicians 60<sup>th</sup> Annual IBM Irish Ring Convention

This is the second occasion that the Ulster Society of Magicians has brought this conference to Belfast. It is recommended the conference does not receive funding because of the small number of delegates – the majority of which are from Northern

Ireland.

Members will also be aware that officers have been liaising with NITB and Invest Northern Ireland to develop a new Conference Subvention Scheme for Belfast and Northern Ireland. £70,000 has been ringfenced within the budget estimates 2010/11 and we are now negotiating the contribution from the other agencies. NITB has confirmed that they will match BCC's budget. Once agreement is reached a new Conference Subvention Scheme will be developed and therefore the current scheme will be closed. The proposed timescale for commencement of the new scheme is June 2010. The existing scheme will close on the 31 May 2010 and all current commitments under this scheme will be honoured.

### **Key Issues**

Conference Subvention policy is used to secure and support national and international conferences to Belfast and to build the City's profile as a conference destination.

Funding is available in the current 2009/2010 Tourism Budget.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Conference Subvention

Aggression – From Fantasy to Action Conference 5-7 May 2010 - £1000  
Private Equity Conference 2010, 26 May 2010 - £500

### **Recommendations**

#### Conference Subvention

Given the substantial economic impact of the conferences and their role in enhancing the image of Belfast as a conference destination, that funding of £1000 is allocated to the Aggression – From Fantasy to Action Conference and £500 is allocated to the Private Equity Conference 2010.

Furthermore, it is recommended The Ulster Society of Magicians 60<sup>th</sup> Annual IBM Irish Ring Convention does not receive funding because of the small number of delegates – the majority of which are from Northern Ireland.

It is also recommended that the existing Conference Subvention Scheme is closed as of 31 May 2010.

### **Decision Tracking**

#### Timeline

A New Conference Subvention Scheme is to be presented to Committee in May 2010

Timeframe: May 2010

Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney

### **Key to Abbreviations**

BVCB Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau  
NITB Northern Ireland Tourist Board