



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Coach Parking
<b>Date:</b>	14 April 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

### Relevant Background Information

Belfast City Council has received a request for funding from the Federation of Passenger Transport Northern Ireland (FPTNI).

FPTNI is a small non for profit organisation set up to promote passenger transport and coach tourism. They represent 70% of private coach companies in Northern Ireland (over 300 coaches) as well as Translink. FPTNI work in partnership with organisations such as the Coach Tourism and Transport Council in Republic of Ireland.

FPTNI are seeking support towards initial set up costs of establishing a new coach parking facility at Ballast Quay (on the site of the old Stena Line terminal). The site is owned by Belfast Harbour Commission and is 0.78 acres. It will accommodate 35 large coaches and 5 medium size coaches. FPTNI plan to secure this area by a series of CCTV cameras with 24 hour surveillance. A new gate will be erected and controlled by remote keyless entry system, supported by an online booking facility and randomised entrance codes for vehicles. There will be a 24 hour emergency and call out facility.

FPTNI's business plan for the Coach Park is based on 50% of the space being allocated to local hotels in Belfast at a cost of £2000 per annum (£2.74 per day) and the remaining spaces will be available to visiting coaches at a cost of £10 per day. The business plan shows a deficit of £8,300 in year one, however in years 2 and 3, the model demonstrates a profit of £7,199 and £12,615 respectively. Any profit will be reinvested into the development/expansion of the facility. FPTNI is seeking support from Belfast City Council towards the initial set up costs i.e. the £8,300 deficit in year 1.

Presently there are 6 coach parking bays at College Square North, 2 bays at Glengall Street and 1 bay for drop off/hop on at Victoria Square. There have been reports of vandalism from coach operators due to lack of secure overnight parking in the city.

The proposal fits well with the draft Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010–2014, which Members approved in February 2010. The framework identifies the need to sustain quality infrastructure and services across the city of which coach parking would be an essential requirement. The Framework also identifies the need to exploit the opportunity presented by the Republic of Ireland market and the all island touring market. In both instances coach operators play an important role in delivering

visitors to the city.

### **Key Issues**

Currently there is limited coach parking in Belfast and no secure overnight facility. Coach operators prefer a central location within walking distance of services. Having discussed the project with Northern Ireland Roads Service, it is clear that there is huge competition for parking space in Belfast, making it extremely difficult to accommodate further coach parking bays than currently offered. Northern Ireland Roads Service would not be responsible for the off road coach parking on private land as identified in this proposal, however they are extremely supportive of the initiative.

Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau has confirmed the need for this resource and believe it offers competitive rates to the industry. They have confirmed that there has been incidences of vandalism to coaches in the past, although the numbers of cases remain relatively low (approximately 5 incidences in the last 3 years).

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board is supportive of the proposal and have agreed in principle to support 25% of the year 1 deficit on the basis that Belfast City Council will cover the remaining 75%.

FPTNI is currently negotiating a 3 year lease with Belfast Harbour Commission. The land is not currently used for any other purpose and its location is not a particularly attractive site for anything other than similar use to that being proposed. There are opportunities to extend the site in future years. FPTNI will be required to produce a valid lease agreement for this site before Belfast City Council would make any contribution.

There have been previous proposals for this type of resource and it is likely that there could be further proposals in the future. FPTNI however is a membership based non profit organisation. Any support from Belfast City Council would be conditional on the profit shown in years 2 and 3 being reinvested into the facility. We would also make it conditional for the facility to be open to non FPTNI members.

### **Resource Implications**

The deficit in Year 1 is £8,300. NITB has agreed, in principle, to support 25% of this figure (£2,070). Belfast City Council could cover the remaining £6,230. Belfast City Council's allocation will be met from 2010/2011 Tourism, Culture and Arts budget.

### **Recommendations**

That the Committee agrees to provide a one off payment of £6,230 to the Federation of Passenger Transport NI towards initial set up costs of a coach parking facility at Ballast Quay

### **Decision Tracking**

No decision tracking required.

### **Key to Abbreviations**

FPTNI – Federation of Passenger Transport Northern Ireland  
NITB – Northern Ireland Tourist Board

### **Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – Letter from FPTNI  
Appendix 2 – 3 year income/expenditure projections for coach parking facility at Ballast Quay.