



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Outputs from South by Southwest (SXSW) & Nashville
Date:	12 May 2010
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

Relevant Background Information

1. South by Southwest (SXSW)

Members will be aware that, at the Development Committee of 14 May 2008, approval was received to support Council participation at the South by Southwest (SXSW) Media Conference and Festival for 2009 and 2010.

SXSW is the premier global event focusing on the creative side of the music and entertainment business. It is held in Austin, Texas on an annual basis and this year's event took place on 17-21 March 2010.

The aim of attending SXSW was, under Belfast City Council's support for the creative industries, to promote Belfast musicians and music-related businesses to an international audience and showcasing the investment and purchasing opportunities offered by Belfast's music industry.

2. Nashville

Members will be aware that at a meeting of the Development Committee on 16 September 2009 approval was given for an outward Civic Visit to Nashville in March 2010.

Members will also be aware that new partnerships have been formed to deliver the Belfast Nashville 2010 Action Plan, which has been greatly expanded to include not only culture and tourism, but education, economic development, genealogy, literary tourism, music tourism, international exhibitions, international marketing, creative industries, film and digital media and communications. Group membership has been expanded to reflect the new plan and now includes formal partnerships with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Queen's University. The group meets on a bi-monthly basis in order to achieve economic benefits from the Sister City relationship.

The purpose of the visit was to:

- Agree the new action plan for 2010 identifying areas of economic development, cultural and tourism links in order to developing and implementing the Sister City Link
- Strengthen and enhance the partnership between the two cities and cement the relationship with the Nashville Mayor's Office and Sister Cities Team

- Utilise the Sister City Linkage to profile Belfast as a cultural tourism destination in the Southern States and increase tourism revenue from this market
- Co-ordinate and support the activities taking place between both cities and better maximise our relationship with Nashville

The Belfast City Council delegation was accompanied (at their own expense) by Tourism Ireland, Belfast Nashville Songwriters' Festival, Filmtrip and, through support from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, five singer-songwriters. BBC Radio Ulster's Ralph McLean also attended in order to present and record music showcases and produce programmes on the Sister City Relationship.

Key Issues

1. South by Southwest (SXSW)

Belfast City Council coordinated and managed the Belfast participation at and input into this year's event. In the absence of the Northern Ireland Music Industry Commission (NIMIC) which was disbanded earlier in the year, officers worked with partners in Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and Arts Council NI (ACNI) to offer twenty Belfast-based businesses the opportunity to take part in SXSW.

The Council's investment of £40,000 was used towards hire of the exhibition stand, showcase venue, marketing and promotional material and support for the selected musicians. We were also able to attract additional finance from ACNI and DCAL. ACNI contributed £32,500 through its Creative Industries Innovation Fund (CIIF) to allow 10 businesses to attend and to cover the costs of a business to business networking event while DCAL provided £13,700 to allow a further 10 businesses be in attendance.

The scale of the participation allowed Belfast to make a greater impact at this year's event. We secured the opening showcase event of the conference programme and received significant publicity and PR coverage around this and the other events that were organised.

The investment levered the following outcomes:

- 20 Belfast based companies participated in the event
- 4 bands and 4 musicians performed at the two Belfast Showcases
- 2 Showcase and networking events were organised, attracting over 2000 international business delegates
- A total of \$269,000 of potential new contracts have been secured to date
- Private sector leverage of at least £20,000 from participating private sector businesses (average £1000 per company)
- 3000 Belfast Music CDs were produced and promoted at the event
- Presence on the exhibition stand in conference centre with over 6,500 in attendance
- Belfast Music CD campaign running across the US for 6 weeks with 40 stations signed up to put the compilation onto their playlists
- Press and PR coverage secured on Culture Northern Ireland, Arts Extra, UTV Live Tonight, BBC Northern Ireland, Frantixmag, Los Angeles Times, Austin Chronicle, BBC Across the Line.

The business outcomes for participating companies are constantly being updated as contracts are agreed. It is anticipated that the figure quoted will increase significantly in the coming months.

In addition to the business side of the conference, meetings were organised with the City of Austin's business development agencies with responsibility for the promotion of the creative industries. It is intended that the relationships established may allow us to develop joint

projects for business to business development between small creative businesses in Austin and Belfast as well as opportunities for partnership working at future SXSW events.

A feedback report detailing company feedback is attached in Appendix 1 and a full report on participants, event attendees and press coverage is available for Members' information.

Subsequent to the event, there has been contact from both DCAL and Invest NI to consider how we might organise participation at the event next year. It is anticipated that the collaborative approach that has been developed over the last two years should be expanded to include additional companies and opportunities for showcasing.

Resource Implications

Belfast City Council contributed £40,000 of a total £86,200 public funding towards the 2010 event. Based on an initially positive list of outcomes from the event, it is recommended that up to a maximum of £40,000 be made available from the 2011 Economic Development budget towards the Belfast participation at the 2011 event. This contribution will be subject to additional funding being made available from other public and private sector partners.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to the allocation of up to £40,000 towards participation in the 2011 South by South West event, subject to additional funding being made available from other public and private sector partners.

Decision Tracking

Subject to approval of the recommendation, a report will be brought back to committee to update on progress in recruiting participants and attracting additional funding.

Timeframe: December 2010

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

2. Nashville

The Belfast Nashville Sister City Relationship has been greatly strengthened by the visit and tangible outputs were achieved. Please see Appendix 2 for details. Highlights include:

New Partnerships:

Mayor's Office of Economic Development and the Nashville Healthcare Council

Since Nashville is the capital of the US health care industry and Belfast is the core of a European Connected Health Network, a new partnership has been established to work collaboratively. An invitation has been issued to the Nashville Healthcare Council to participate in the European Connected Health network Summit in June 2010 in order to establish linkages.

Nashville Music Council and Chamber of Commerce

This was established by the Mayor's Office in order to spearhead economic development efforts that capitalise on Nashville's identity as Music City. They have agreed to develop a stronger relationship with Belfast in relation to music development, joint showcasing, exchange models of best practice in order to generate economic return for both cities.

Nashville Visitor and Convention Bureau (NVCB)

The NVCB received a presentation from Belfast City Council and have agreed to work in partnership with the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB) in order to maximise the international promotion of both cities. They provided marketing, print, distribution and online marketing support for the delegation visit and music showcases and shared best practice on the creation of a music city. An outward visit from BVCB in Autumn 2010 will result in further collaborations.

Nashville Symphony Hall

Following the visit, there is an opportunity to strengthen ties and increase performances in both cities. Belfast's Barry Douglas and Camerata Ireland will perform at the symphony in March 2011.

Nashville Arts and Business Council will partner with Arts and Business Northern Ireland in order to share best practice.

Tourism

BCC worked in partnership with Tourism Ireland to utilize the Sister City Linkage to profile Belfast as a cultural tourism destination in the Southern States and increase tourism revenue from this market. Tourism Ireland worked with their offices across the United States to highlight the music showcase events and promoted the event to travel and music journalists. They marketed Belfast City Council's new music products including belfastmusic.org to promote Belfast as a vibrant European destination and the gateway to Ireland and Europe.

- PR and media coverage in the States to send out a positive message of Belfast - TV, radio, web, Tennessee news press, specialist trade music magazines, specialist travel press.
- Belfast received over \$55,000 equivalent in advertising of print media coverage.
- Targeted marketing to the Scots-Irish community in the Southern States to increase cultural tourism visitors.
- 1000 Northern Ireland CDs distributed

Genealogy

Belfast City Council partnered with the Ulster Scots Community Network and Tourism Ireland to create the exhibition Ulster and Tennessee, the Ulster-Scots contribution to the making of the United States. The exhibition was launched at the Andrew Jackson Homestead, the Hermitage, on the anniversary of Jackson's birthday. The ceremony was attended by over 150 people, Tennessee media, and a descendent of Andrew Jackson. The exhibition is now available as a permanent resource in Nashville and 5000 booklets have been distributed.

Belfast City Council partnered with the Ulster Historical Foundation to create the Belfast Nashville Historical and Genealogical Connections Booklet and Guide to researching family and history in Belfast. This was in order to profile cultural and historical links between the two cities and target the Scots-Irish community in the Southern States as potential holiday visitors. It was launched at the Andrew Jackson Hermitage, 5000 booklets have been distributed and it is now available as an online resource through Sister Cities. An exhibition charting the role of Scots-Irish influence in education, religion, politics and culture, such as Andrew Jackson, Woodrow Wilson, John Steinbeck, Mark Twain and Neil Armstrong.

Music

Delivered by the Belfast Nashville Songwriters' Festival and supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, four musicians Iain Archer, Ricky Warwick, Aaron Shanley and Gareth Dunlop, performed three showcases with high profile singer-songwriters from Nashville. It was a unique opportunity to launch Belfast's Music Tourism initiatives internationally. The showcases culminated in a high profile public concert with Nashville and Belfast musicians on Saturday 13 March and this will be broadcast on BBC Radio Ulster later this year. Six professional award-winning songwriters from Nashville waived their fees of £12,000 in order to perform. It was hosted by Ralph McLean from BBC Northern Ireland and a live recording was broadcast on BBC Radio Ulster. The showcases were attended by Nashville's music industry professionals including publishers, record companies and agents. It was also

supported by Mayor Dean, the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, Sister City Representatives and music journalists. Please see Appendix 2 for full details.

Belfast Nashville Songwriters' Festival Showcases improved the business networks and partnerships between Belfast and Nashville by showcasing Belfast's music talent in the international marketplace. They :

- Provided networking opportunities for those working in Belfast's music sector and potential buyers and distributors by inviting key figures from the music industry
- Increased the number of Belfast musicians doing business internationally by identification of potential new investment and partnerships
- Raised the profile of the Sister City Relationship in Belfast
- Promoted the 2011 Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival and Belfast Songwriting Convention to new artists music industry figures.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of the opportunities available in Nashville for musicians by face-to-face meetings and distributing information
- Were influential in securing sponsorship support from leading songwriter organisations for 2010.

Outputs include:

- Gareth Dunlop is in negotiations with a leading Nashville publisher following the Bluebird Showcase and has been invited back to Nashville in June 2010.
- Aaron Shanley is also negotiating with a leading Nashville publisher and with a large American corporation on a Europe-wide sponsorship deal following the Dan McGuinness showcase.
- Both Iain Archer and Ricky Warwick have co-written with several leading writers in Nashville and the songs are being published in UK & USA
- A two-hour Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival Showcase was recorded for radio by The Music Row Show then broadcast to 29 States and on the internet. Recorded by WLAC at the Clear Channel Building, Nashville.
- Showcase performances and interviews will be broadcast on BBC NI television as part of two documentaries on Ian Brick and Ricky Warwick.

Education

Members will be aware that a formal relationship has been established between Queen's University and Vanderbilt University which has resulted in international research collaborations, student and lecturer exchanges and facilitated connections between schools, departments, and offices to promote internationalisation. Key individuals from the Vanderbilt Office attended Belfast City Council events and the Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival showcases. The Vice-Chancellor and a delegation from Queen's University will visit Nashville in May 2010.

Resource Implications

£50,000 which has been provided within the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit budget for implementation of the 2010 /11 action plan.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Notes the contents of this report
2. Commits to developing the Nashville Sister City relationship and 2010/11 Action Plan and its implementation within budget.
3. Approves an inward Civic Visit from Mayor Dean in 2010 (no additional financial commitment is required from Committee)

Decision Tracking

Further to approval, an update report in relation to planning and preparation will be brought to Committee.

Timeframe: September 2010 Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeney

Key to Abbreviations

SXSW – South by South West
DCAL – Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
ACNI – Arts Council for Northern Ireland
CIIF – Creative Industries Innovation Fund
NVCB - Nashville Visitor and Convention Bureau

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Feedback report
Appendix 2 - Feedback from Civic Visit to Sister City Nashville