



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Learning Journey to Bilbao
Date:	11 August 2010
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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Relevant Background Information

2012 offers a significant opportunity for Belfast with the opening of the Titanic Signature project. Belfast City Council is working closely with a range of government departments and local stakeholders to ensure we maximize this opportunity for the entire city. This includes implementing key actions through a Memorandum of Understanding with Titanic Quarter Limited to maximize employment and other appropriate opportunities across the city; developing a Maritime Heritage Study with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and Department of Social Development (DSD) to ensure we are delivering an authentic and unique maritime heritage destination by 2012 and thereafter; and working in partnership with NITB to prepare a 2012 business plan which will support the marketing and events programme to mark Titanic's centenary.

As part of the focus on 2012, NITB has invited Belfast City Council to participate in a Learning Journey to Bilbao from 21–23 September 2010. The purpose of the trip is to experience at first hand a successful visitor maritime destination that encourages return visits, longer stays and recommendations to friends and relatives. The trip will allow key influencers to have a unique insight into Bilbao and draw parallels with Belfast as a city, the maritime heritage theme and the Titanic.

The following organisations have received an invitation to the trip, although it should be noted places are limited:

- Belfast City Council
- DSD
- Titanic Quarter Ltd
- Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- Lagan Legacy
- Titanic Dock and Pump-House
- NI Tour Guide Association

- Titanic Foundation Ltd
- National Museums NI
- Belfast Titanic Society
- SS Nomadic
- W5
- ILEX
- Derry City Council

A draft itinerary is attached as appendix 1.

Key Issues

The Learning Journey will be an opportunity for the Development Committee to see how Bilbao delivered a successful maritime heritage product and will include site visits to the Ria de Bilbao Maritime Museum and the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum. The content of the presentations will be of particular interest to Belfast as officials from Bilbao will explain how they engaged with wider stakeholders; recovered former industrial space around the city, redeveloped the port and industrial areas along the estuary and protected the historical heritage.

NITB plan to fund the majority of the trip but will be seeking a small contribution of £200 per delegate. The trip is limited to a small number and is subject to availability of the key stakeholders. Belfast City Council was initially offered one place, but due to the significance of 2012 to Belfast, we have negotiated two places on the trip.

NITB will require each delegate to complete a report on the trip and this will be circulated to all Members of the Development Committee to review and share the key learnings from this trip.

Resource Implications

NITB are subsidizing this trip and therefore the only fee is £200 per delegate. £400 to be paid to NITB for two delegates from the Tourism, Culture and Arts budget.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee agrees that the Chair and one officer accept NITB's invitation to attend the Learning Journey to Bilbao on the 21–23rd September 2010 at a cost of £200 per person.

Decision Tracking

Post evaluation report to be circulated to all Members of Development Committee

Timeframe - November 2010

Reporting Officer – Shirley McCay

Key Abbreviations

NITB – Northern Ireland Tourist Board DSD – Department of Social Development

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Draft Itinerary
