



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Request from Belfast Civic Trust to make a presentation to Committee
<b>Date:</b>	10 November 2010
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Mr John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ms Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

### Relevant Background Information

A request has been received from Belfast Civic Trust (a voluntary organisation particularly concerned with the built environment of the city) to make a presentation to Committee about their ideas for a 'Belfast History Centre' and what they are calling an 'Ulster Provincial Art Gallery'. The Trust recently met with the Minister for the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and are presently presenting their proposals to other bodies and organisations as well. A copy of their letter and proposals is attached as appendix 1.

### Key Issues

Belfast Civic Trust are seeking the establishment of a Belfast History Centre dedicated to telling the story of Belfast. They have been pursuing such a project for a number of years and indicate their desire to see implementation of this proposal before the centenary of the Belfast Charter in April 2013.

The proposal from Belfast Civic Trust is to create an Ulster Provincial Art Gallery to enable display of works held in Archives by the Ulster Museum and the Arts Council.

The Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework has been tabled at this Committee. Members will be aware that a project called 'The Belfast Story' is a core part of this strategy and is identified as visionary driver. A number of innovative approaches to engaging communities with their particular histories and that of the city as a whole are suggested as part of this. A proposal to develop displays and access to the City Hall which supports The Belfast Story is also active and sources of funding for both projects is currently being sought. Together these proposals are seeking to enable a substantial presentation of Belfast's history in an inclusive manner.

The issue of a major central art gallery for Northern Ireland has been considered on a number of occasions and various reports produced. The key stakeholders are the Arts Council and National Museums for Northern Ireland.

The proposals submitted by Belfast Civic Trust are in outline form only however they resonate with some of the objectives contained in the Integrated Tourism Strategic Framework. There is a great deal of potential to be gained from engaging with Belfast Civic Trust as a key stakeholder that can help Council and other partners deliver on the city's agreed strategy.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to receive a presentation from Belfast Civic Trust at a future meeting to investigate how mutually beneficial partnerships can be pursued.

#### **Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – Letter and proposals from Belfast Civic Trust