



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Sister City Nashville
Date:	10 November 2010
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that at a meeting of the Development Committee on 12 May 2010, approval and budget was given to develop the Nashville Sister City relationship and 2010/11 Action Plan and its implementation. It was agreed that an update report in relation to planning and preparation will be brought to Committee.

Members will also be aware that new partnerships have been formed to deliver the Belfast Nashville 2010 /11 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 Action Plan is delivered by the Belfast Nashville Advisory Group, which includes representatives from the leisure and cultural sector, historical groups, genealogy associations, community development, media and educational organisations. The aim is to explore, agree and implement identified areas of cultural, tourism and economic development and collaboration between the two cities, and to co-ordinate and support the activities taking place between both cities and better maximise economic outputs from Sister City Nashville.

Key Issues

1. Approval is sought from Committee to develop the Nashville Sister City relationship by approving the contents of the 2010 / 2011 Action Plan and its implementation (Appendix 1). The relationship between the two cities has been greatly strengthened with a focus on achieving maximum economic benefits for Belfast. A considerable number of partner organisations contributed both financially and in kind to sustaining the relationship, including Tourism Ireland, US Consulate, BBC, Ulster Historical Foundation, Ulster Scots Heritage Society, Queen's University and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Feedback from Partners in attached as Appendix 2.

2. Support for the Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival and Belfast Nashville Songwriters Convention is a key component of the Belfast Nashville Action Plan. The 6th Festival, held on 24–28 February 2010, increased dramatically in profile and scale and included over 100 Songwriters, 30 Concerts and 20 Seminars. It attracted higher profile artists to Belfast and hence successful local musicians. Visitor numbers have increased by 29% in comparison to 2008 and it attracted over 18% of its visitors from outside Northern Ireland, leading to a much greater economic impact for Belfast.

Approval is sought to support the 7th Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival, scheduled for 23 – 27 February 2011. As part of the ongoing review of Culture and Arts funding provided by the Development Committee as part of the Integrated Cultural Strategy, it is recommended that the support of the Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival from 2012 onwards will be aligned to the support provided to all festivals across the city through the Culture and Arts funding streams.

The Nashville Music Council was established by the Mayor's Office in order to spearhead economic development efforts that capitalise on Nashville's identity as Music City USA. Mayor of Nashville, Karl Dean has extended an invitation to Belfast City Council to attend the Music Council's Annual Programme for Civic Leaders which focuses on how city leaders can receive maximum economic return from its Music Industry and Music Tourism. The Mayor's office has agreed to develop a stronger relationship with Belfast in relation to music development, joint showcasing, and exchanging models of best practice in order to generate economic return for both cities.

Approval is sought to investigate opportunities for an outward visit to Nashville in 2011, to coincide with the Civic Leaders Programme, and to avail of support from our partners ACNI, Tourism Ireland, BBC and Queen's University in order to schedule cultural tourism, education and creative industry activity during this time. A report will be brought to Committee in December 2010 with full details.

Resource Implications

N/A. On 12th May 2010, Members approved £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 Members

1. Note the contents of this report
2. Commit to developing the Nashville Sister City relationship by approving the contents of the 2010/11 Action Plan (Appendix 1) and its implementation within budget.
3. Approve support of the Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival, 23 – 27 February 2011, of £20,000
4. Agree that officers investigate options of an outward visit to coincide with the Music Industry Programme for Civic Leaders and report back at December Committee meeting.

Decision Tracking

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

Timeframe: December 2010 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay
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Documents Attached

Appendix 1: Belfast Nashville Sister City Action Plan 2010 / 11

Appendix 2: Feedback from Sister City Partners
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