



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Visit by delegation from Hefei, China
Date:	12 January 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that, over the last decade, the cities of Belfast and Hefei have been developing linkages. These culminated in the signature of a Sister Cities relationship between the two cities in 2005. A number of visits and exchanges between the cities have taken place and new relationships continue to develop. The most recent was a visit in July 2010 by a small group of officials who were visiting Belfast as part of a wider UK meeting programme. Representatives from the Development Committee hosted a lunch with the group and a programme of meetings and presentations was organised, in conjunction with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Chinese Welfare Association in Belfast.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>As part of the Chinese New Year celebrations which will take place at the beginning of February 2011, a delegation from the city of Hefei is to visit Belfast. This will consist of 14 dance performers as well as a four-strong civic contingent. These representatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Mr Guo Bendao – Vice-Chair of Hefei Committee, Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference– Mr Cao Jianshe – Assistant to the Director of Hefei Foreign Affairs Office– Ms Yang Xiaoyan – Deputy Director of the Hefei Cultural Bureau– Mr He Yonghu – Deputy Head of Division, Hefei Cultural Bureau– Mr Gao Jiansheng – Director, Hefei Performance Centre. <p>The programme – including the Hefei visit – is being coordinated by the Chinese Welfare Association (CWA) in Belfast.</p>

2.2	<p>The delegation will arrive on 4 February and will take part in a programme of activities over the course of four days. These include:</p> <p><u>5 February</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit to Carrickfergus Borough Council – performance in Civic Centre <p><u>6 February</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chinese New Year event at St George’s Market (all day). <p><u>7 February</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chinese New Year dinner function at Europa hotel <p><u>8 February</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visits to Derry City Council; attendance at dinner function in the city.
2.3	<p>A request has just been made to the Lord Mayor’s Office for a meeting between the civic delegation and the Lord Mayor on the morning of 7 February. This meeting has not yet been confirmed.</p>
2.4	<p>The Food Health team within Health and Environmental Services Department is supporting the management of a “Masterchef” event as part of the St George’s Market celebrations on 6 February. The team will cover all costs related to the promotion and management of this event.</p>
2.5	<p>In addition, £500 has been secured from the Community Safety Team’s small grants as part of the Unite Against Hate campaign. This will be used towards the costs of the New Year’s event at St George’s Market.</p>
2.6	<p>The Good Relations Partnership has been asked to provide £2,000 towards the event. This support has been approved, on condition that the expenditure relates to the promotion of good relations in the city.</p>
2.7	<p>The Chinese Welfare Association has asked the Development Committee to fund a range of costs related to hospitality for the civic delegation in the city (appendix 1). It is proposed that up to £1,500 is provided to cover hospitality costs for the civic delegation during the visit to Belfast to include a specific reception or lunch for the delegation to which Members of the Development Committee be invited.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p>As identified above, it is proposed that up to £1,500 is provided by the Development Committee to contribute towards the hospitality involved with the hosting of the Hefei delegation in the city.</p>

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	<p>The work is closely linked to Good Relations and Community Safety Units’ campaigns to enhance community relations and address hate crime in the city.</p>

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>It is recommended that Members;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to support the Chinese New Year event programme to a cost of £1,500, in addition to the other support being provided by Council, as detailed above and 2. Agree that Members of the Development Committee attend any specific civic event arranged for the Hefei delegates.

6	Decision Tracking
None.	

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Letter from Chinese Welfare Association	