



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Special Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast City Centre Management – draft business plan
Date:	22 February 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen Director of Development ext 3470
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that, at the December 2009 meeting of the Development Committee, agreement was reached on the recommendation to approve annual funding for Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) of £190,000 per year for two years, subject to annual review, commencing April 2010 and subject to activities and targets being met. This means that the current request will be the final year of the current in-principle funding commitment.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Belfast City Centre Management has prepared a draft business plan for the period 2011-2013 (Appendix 1). The business plan outlines the broad areas of focus for the organisation in the coming two years. At this stage, funding is being sought from Belfast City Council for the first of the two years only.
2.2	The organisation plans to rationalise a number of its functions and to prioritise new areas of work, taking account of the economic climate and of the priorities of their major funders.
2.3	In this regard, some preliminary discussions have taken place with Belfast City Council at officer level and with Department for Social Development (DSD), as the organisation's principal public funders.
2.4	The proposed vision for the organisation – as identified within the business plan – is “to assist in the development of Business Improvement Districts for Belfast City Centre”. The concept of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) is referred to elsewhere in these reports and members will be aware that DSD has recently issued a consultation on the matter. If the legislation on this issue progresses, the concept could be operational from Spring/Summer 2012.

2.5	<p>Legislation is already in place in other parts of the UK and Ireland to permit the establishment of BIDs. In a number of other cities where BIDs have been established, the town or city centre management company often takes over the role of the BID management. In these instances, the BID management duties can co-exist alongside other work in which the organisation is involved or the town centre management company effectively becomes the BID management company. If this were to be the case, there would be a need for further discussion with Belfast City Council and the organisation's other key stakeholders.</p>
2.6	<p>The majority of the work of BCCM will be carried out and managed by three working groups. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Space Management • Economic Performance • Safer City. <p>These groups undertake a range of activities in the course of the year and the draft action plans for each are listed in section 7 of the draft business plan.</p>
2.7	<p>It is proposed that, subject to general endorsement of the business plan by this Committee, officers will work with the management team at BCCM to further refine the work of these groups, to ensure compliance with wider council policies and to support the delivery of council objectives.</p>
2.8	<p>From the Development Committee's perspective, there are a number of key areas of work in which BCCM can support our activities in the coming year. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of targeted strategy to create a unique, balanced retail portfolio in the city centre. • Coordination of activities to animate vacant premises, in conjunction with other relevant partners • Support in delivery of Belfast Business Awards • Support in development and delivery of initiatives to support the independent retail sector • Liaison with business community to facilitate the roll-out of the final phase of the Streets Ahead project • Support in delivery of street dressing and lighting initiatives.
2.9	<p>There are also a number of wider issues affecting council services, particularly cleansing and accessibility issues. These will be dealt with through the Public Space Management Action Group, which is currently chaired by the Director of Health and Environmental Services.</p>
2.10	<p>In order to maximise the impact of our support for BCCM, it is also proposed that further work is done to identify synergies between their work programme and that of other organisations such as Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB), in order to ensure maximum return on investment for the council.</p>
2.11	<p>In line with guidance from our Internal Audit team, the issue of performance management in dealing with externally-funded organisations should be taken into account in any new agreement with BCCM. It is important therefore that funding from Belfast City Council to BCCM is related to the achievement of key performance indicators which directly relate to the objectives of the Council's corporate plan. It is therefore proposed that a service level agreement is put in</p>

	place, incorporating a range of measurable targets and that this is monitored on a regular basis.
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3	Resource Implications
3.1	The funding requested for this financial year is £190,000.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	BCCM will be required to ensure that their plan is equality proofed.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the request for funding of £190,000 for the financial year 2011-2012, subject to agreed actions being undertaken and to targets being met, as set out in a service level agreement • Agree that further discussion should take place between BCCM and relevant council officers and members as well as other key funders to agree activities, targets and budgets to be included in the service level agreement, in order to ensure an integrated approach to support for the organisation.

6	Decision Tracking
An update report on progress will be presented to members in October 2011.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
<p>BCCM – Belfast City Centre Management DSD – Department for Social Development</p>	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Draft BCCM business plan – 2011-2013	