



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	City Events Action Plan
<b>Date:</b>	13 April 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Tim Husbands, Head of City Events and Venues, ext 1401

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	<p>Over that last decade and a half Belfast City Council has developed an annual programme of events. These events span the calendar year from St Patrick's Day concert and parade in the Spring to the Christmas Lights concert and include major sporting events. The events in 2009 attracted nearly over 1.4 million people generating nearly £18 million additional economic activity for Belfast. In 2009/10 the return on the Council's investment was just under £6.80 of every £1 of the city's finances. The events have also attracted on average 7% of out-of-state visitors adding to the vibrancy and cultural activity of Belfast. The current annual events programme also operates as an attraction to local citizens and rate payers providing large-scale free public events to the city with extensive positive media coverage, while receiving an approval rating of nearly 90% for the entire year's programme of activities.</p>
1.2	<p>The purpose of this report is to request that Members permit that the City Events and Venues Unit initiate a process of consultation with Council party political groups and BCC departments on the strategic way forward for events in the city from 2011 to 2015. This would then be followed by public consultation from the end May to Sept 2011 on the attached Action Plan (see appendix 1). The proposed action plan would not only provide guidance on the staging of annual events in the city, but would also have input to the delivery of significant events such as: the staging of the MTV EMAs in 2011; planned activity around 2012 under the Titanic and London Olympic programme; the Council's £400,000 input to the staging of the World Police and Fire Games in 2013 and bidding for major events in 2014 and 2015.</p>

1.3	Although the Action Plan is in a draft consultative form it has benefited from the on-going daily work of the Council's City Events Unit to mark key historical dates in Belfast's history. This is exemplified in that the Council has agreed to a £1m of events focused around 2012 along and with the establishment of an all Party Working Group looking at other key anniversaries over the next ten years.
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<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<p><u>Events Delivery Process and Strategic Vision</u></p> <p>As part of Belfast City Council's aim to deliver quality, customer-focused services, a decision was made in 2007 to integrate the Council's Sports and Civic Events units and to form the City Events Unit. This team, which is part of the Development Department's City Events and Venues Section, brings together a level of expertise and resources which will improve the planning, co-ordination and delivery of Council events across the city<sup>1</sup>. The action plan will take cognisance of key historical dates and anniversaries connected to the city and how these should be managed and delivered.</p>
2.2	<p>The creation of the City Events Unit also provides the opportunity to develop the first action plan for events in Belfast. The action plan will allow the city to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define the scope of events related work and provide focus and direction for the next four years;</li> <li>- Develop a more cohesive and co-ordinated approach to events in the city;</li> <li>- Develop the portfolio of Council led events in Belfast through attracting new events to the city and developing, re-invigorating existing events and engage the city's cultural and community sectors;</li> <li>- Improve the quality of Council led events in the city for residents and visitors;</li> <li>- Maximise Belfast's profile and reputation as an events location and improve its competitiveness and ability to attract major events to the city;</li> <li>- Contribute to Belfast's economy by generating significant economic impact through events;</li> <li>- Contribute further to Belfast's tourism and cultural offering and providing a range of events to encourage visitors to come to Belfast at all times of the year;</li> <li>- Improve the marketing and promotion of Council led events;</li> <li>- Assist community event organisers and other event providers in the city through advice and skills development opportunities; and</li> <li>- Develop and strengthen relationships with partners such as BVCB, NITB, DSD, Sport NI, ACNI, DCAL and Tourism Ireland, event promoters, event governing bodies, service providers, the voluntary, community and culture and arts sectors.</li> </ul>
2.3	<p><u>Vision and Aims</u></p> <p>The proposed draft City Events Action Plan sets out a vision, aims, objectives and actions for 2011 to 2015. The proposed vision for events in Belfast is that:</p>

<sup>1</sup> At present the Parks and Leisure Department will continue to organise events that are held in Belfast's parks and open spaces. There will be liaison between the City Events and its colleagues within Parks and Leisure to ensure a synergy of events delivered and if required a review of this delivery process.

2.4	Belfast will be renowned as a leading events destination with a reputation for quality and innovative events. Events will continue to generate substantial economic, cultural and social impacts, contribute to the city's positive profile and provide visitors and citizens with a choice of events making sure they have enjoyable things to see and do when in Belfast.
2.5	However, in order to achieve this proposed vision, three draft aims have been developed which relate to three key areas:
2.6	<u>Area 1 Events</u> Aim - For Belfast to be recognised as a city that delivers a programme of innovative and high quality events which attract and entertain residents and visitors alike
2.7	<u>Portfolio of our events</u> - A key objective of this action plan is to develop the city's portfolio of events by focusing on attracting a number of major events to Belfast, continuing to deliver an annual programme of events, and developing a series of signature events for the city.
2.8	Through this action plan our objective is to bring one major event to Belfast each year from 2011 to 2015 and beyond. The draft action plan would also propose that the Council continues to organise a programme of annual events each year but assess the ongoing viability of each of these events to ensure that they are sustainable and source additional funds to complement Council funding.
2.9	In the Belfast events programme we have a wealth of indigenous events that, through additional support, could be developed into "signature" events for the city. Through the proposed action plan it would be an aim to develop four new events or support existing events to grow into "signature" events for Belfast. This will recognise the key dates and anniversaries connected to the city in order that events will have an indigenous look and feel pertinent to Belfast.
2.10	<u>Attendance</u> - Over the four years of the action plan our objectives are to increase the overall number of people coming to our annual events, increase the average level of repeat attendance and to increase the number of visitors from outside Northern Ireland attending events.
2.11	<u>Satisfaction Levels</u> - High satisfaction levels are vital to the success of our events. While satisfaction levels are currently high (8.7 out of 10), we recognise the need to continually improve the quality of our events. Our objective for the next four years is to maintain satisfaction levels of at least 9 out of 10 across all our events.
2.12	<u>Area 2 Capacity and capability</u> Aim - To develop the capacity and capability of Belfast to attract, deliver and market a wide range of high quality events and in doing so enhance the sustainability of the city's events sector
2.13	<u>Marketing of events to residents and visitors</u> - At present the marketing of events uses a generic (mass marketing) approach but this does not allow us to target particular segments of the market that are under-represented. There is potential to attract more visitors to our events; this could be done through integrating events into marketing campaigns to enhance the tourism offering of the city.

2.14	<p><u>Belfast's profile as an event location</u> - One of the key factors in being able to attract major events to Belfast is the profile of the city as an events location. There is a growing need to develop the profile of Belfast among international event organisers. In order to attract major events, Belfast must dedicate resources to building the profile of the city as an events location.</p>
2.15	<p>In conjunction with the key partners mentioned in the draft action plan the Council would develop an international programme of marketing activity. This will include promotional attendance at key event conferences and exhibitions in order to raise the profile of Belfast as an events location.</p>
2.16	<p><u>Growth and Sustainability</u> - The contribution of events to the city's economy and tourist offerings is significant and it is therefore important that all events in Belfast are assisted to grow and become more sustainable in the future. To support this there are a number of areas that the action plan will focus on over the next four years.</p>
2.17	<p><u>Scheduling of Events</u> - Through this plan we will aim to improve the way events, particularly Council events, are scheduled throughout the year. We will work with partners to develop a comprehensive calendar of events in Belfast which will be used to ensure that there is a more focused approach to the scheduling of events throughout the year. This process will also take cognisance of key anniversaries and historical dates that will impact on events funding and scheduling.</p>
2.18	<p><u>Physical Infrastructure</u> - At present Belfast does not have a large enough venue for some major events, however our strengths lie in organising and securing those events that can be held in existing venues in the city. The Council and its partners need to develop a greater understanding of the physical infrastructure for events in Belfast. As part of the draft action plan it would be intended that an audit of venues across the city is undertaken to capture the information gathered in an events venue database. The information will give Belfast a better understanding of each venue's capacity and facilities. This will assist us when bidding for major events and in promoting Belfast as an events location.</p>
2.19	<p><u>Skills Development and Best Practice</u> - As we aim to grow and develop events in Belfast, the success of these events will be determined by the capacity and capabilities of organisers to deliver events. For this reason it is crucial to develop the skills and knowledge of event organisers in Belfast. As part of the proposed Council draft action plan the City Events Unit will continue to support external event organisers through offering guidance and advice where possible. It would be the intention to commission the development of an 'Events Development Toolkit' that can assist event organisers to enhance their skills in key areas such as marketing, income generation, event management and business planning.</p>
2.20	<p>The action plan will also look at complementing and assisting the development of the community based events sector through skills enhancement. It should be noted that the action plan does not see new funding for community based events organisers, rather a focus on skills and capacity.</p>
2.21	<p><u>Funding</u> - Currently the City Events Unit funds events through three processes. Smaller scale sports; major sports events funds and major event funding. In 2009 a total of £97,000 was allocated to 40 organisations through Support for Sport. Larger-scaled sports events funding over £10,000 are managed through the submission of a business plan to the City Events Unit.</p>

2.22	It would be the intention of this action plan to review both the Support of Sport scheme and funding for larger-scaled sports events.
2.23	<p><u>Area 3 Impact</u>  Aim - To maximise the impact events have on Belfast and the economic, social and cultural benefits that they bring to the city</p>
2.24	<p><u>Assessing the impact of events</u> - The City Events Unit must be able to accurately assess the difference that events make to Belfast. We will develop an assessment framework which will capture detailed information on the full impact of the Councils events. The adoption of a common assessment framework will allow the impact of different events to be compared and assist in predicting outcomes for future events.</p>
2.25	<p><u>Economic Impact</u> - An important part of an event's overall impact is its direct and indirect economic impact.  Over the four years of the action plan our objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To increase the economic impact of annual events in Belfast by 5% per year</li> <li>- To achieve a return rate of investment for the Council of £8 for every £1 spent</li> </ul>
2.26	<p>In order to ensure that the assessments, which the Council commissions, capture as accurately as possible the full range of direct and indirect impacts, we will undertake a review of our existing assessments. We will continue to measure the return on investment which events have through economic impact assessments. In order to achieve this the Action Plan will develop better cooperation internally and externally in order to avoid major clashes but seize opportunities for Belfast, especially those which reflect the city's cultural background and historical reference points.</p>
2.27	<p><u>Social Impacts</u> - The social impact of events is a difficult measurement to gauge. However there are number of key factors that can be analysed such as levels of volunteering, community participation; skills development and change in residents' perception of the city. We will aim to capture information in relation to each of these areas as part of the event assessment framework and will revise our information collection methods and surveys in order to do so.</p>
2.28	<p><u>Volunteering</u> - Many events are dependent on volunteers. They provide a valuable resource and bring to the event their skills, experience and enthusiasm.</p>
2.29	<p>Through this plan we will develop a programme to provide opportunities for volunteers to assist at Council and other events in the city. We will identify key events which require volunteers and provide training and mentoring opportunities in order that volunteer resources are maximised for all events within the city.</p>
2.30	<p><u>Event Champions and Ambassadors</u> - The utilisation of key individuals to promote Belfast as a key event location is important. These 'Ambassadors/Champions' would be individuals from both public and private sectors who recognise the important role that major events can bring to Belfast and NI.</p>

2.31	Through this action plan we will continue to work closely with all our partners and regularly engage with them in order to grow and develop events in Belfast. It is important that this action plan compliments and contributes to the ongoing work and strategies of these organisations.
2.32	<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The purpose of the proposed Events Action Plan is to ensure that events in the City of Belfast have a positive benefit to its citizens and visitors. The Action Plan is designed to bring synergy to events organised in Belfast that in turn provide economic betterment, social impacts and positive reputational changes. These processes will only be achieved via working across and with public, private and voluntary sectors within Belfast and Northern Ireland. It will also require Belfast to work on a national basis in Ireland and the UK and developing and enhancing relationships internationally.</p>

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>There would be no additional cost to implement the consultation process on the draft action plan. There also be no additional costs incurred due to the implementation of the plan, as all costs would be consumed within the current annual City Events Unit budget for 2011/12 of £1.4m.</p>
3.2	<p>It should be noted that this figure will vary and is dependent upon the size and scale of major one-off events staged in the city e.g. Tall Ships 2009 cost was £3.5m; MTV EMAs is £750,000 and World Irish Dancing Championships 2012 will be an additional £200,000.</p>
3.3	<p>We would ask Members to note that the events budgets in other cities in the UK and other international locations varies from Hull in England who spend £1.2m to Edinburgh who spend over £10m. A list of seven cities that have been researched is detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cardiff who spend £2m which is financed from the City Council and other partners.</li> <li>– Edinburgh City who expend £2.2m budget which is complemented with £8m from the private and public sectors (Total budget in excess of £10m).</li> <li>– Glasgow City Council’s Culture &amp; Sports company has a backing of funding totalling around £3.6m.</li> <li>– Hull City spends £1.2m with staff costs inclusive of this figure</li> <li>– Montreal City has a budget of CAN\$2m which is spent directly on events. This figure is complemented by finances from external partners</li> <li>– Newcastle is estimated to spend just over £5.8m on events. This is funded from a variety of sources including the Newcastle City Council and other public bodies</li> <li>– Rotterdam operates on an budget equivalent £2.4m for funding and staging events</li> </ul>
3.4	<p>All cities researched indicated that these figures would ebb and flow dependent the nature, size and scale of one-off events.</p>

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	The Action Plan would require verification and checking via the Council's equality and good relations processes.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	Members are requested to approve that the City Events Unit implement a process of consultation with Council political parties and departments followed by external public consultations.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
If agreed by Members, Officers will monitor and amend the action plan during the consultation process and report back to Committee.	
Timeline: Autumn 2011	
Reporting Officer: Tim Husbands	

<b>7</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
Appendix 1 – Draft Events Action Plan	

**Appendix 1 – Draft Events Action Plan**



**Belfast City Council**

**CITY EVENTS UNIT  
ACTION PLAN  
2011 - 2015**

**Version 3.0**

**27 August 2015**



<b>CONTENTS</b>		<b>Page</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>FORWARD</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
	3.1 Belfast	8
	3.2 Belfast's Events	8
	3.3 Benefits of Events	8
	3.4 Action plan for Events	8
	3.5 Strategic Context	8
<b>4.</b>	<b>VISION AND AIMS</b>	<b>8</b>
	4.1 Vision	8
	4.2 Aims	8
<b>5.</b>	<b>EVENTS</b>	<b>8</b>
	5.1 Our Portfolio of Events	8
	5.2 Attendance	8
	5.3 Satisfaction Levels	8
	5.4 Summary of Objectives	8
<b>6.</b>	<b>CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY</b>	<b>8</b>
	6.1 Marketing of Events	8
	6.2 Belfast's Profile as an Event Location	8
	6.3 Communications	8
	6.4 Growth and Sustainability	8
	6.5 Funding	8
	6.6 Summary of Objectives	8
<b>7.</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>	<b>8</b>
	7.1 Assessing the Impact of Events	8
	7.2 Volunteering	8
	7.3 Summary of Objectives	8
<b>8.</b>	<b>ACTION PLAN</b>	<b>8</b>

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix I – Action Plan

Appendix II – Draft Event Assessment Framework

## **Disclosure**

This document is a **draft** and is expected to be superseded by the final report. We reserve the right to add, delete and/or amend the report as we consider appropriate.

This report is confidential to Belfast City Council and is prepared solely for the purposes(s) set out in the submitted proposal.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

Belfast in 2010 is a strong and thriving city with a robust economy, rising tourist numbers, a vibrant social and cultural life and sound political governance. In 2009 Belfast welcomed 9.3 million visitors who injected an estimated £451 million into the local economy.

Events in Belfast have also developed as the city has. Over the past decade Belfast City Council has developed an annual programme of events which have become firmly established within the fabric of the city. The city also hosts over 55 festivals throughout the year and a number of large-scale events such as the Special Olympics Ireland Games, the Under 21 Rugby World Cup, the World Irish Dancing Championships, and the 2009 Tall Ships festival have all been held in the city.

Belfast City Council, in conjunction with its partners, has played a key role in developing events in the city which have an impact on the areas of: the city's profile; a boost for the local economy; increased out-of-state visitors; positive impacts with regard to social and community activity and also the fact that events can leave a lasting legacy for Belfast.

### ***Action plan for Events***

In 2007 Belfast City Council's City Events Unit was formed. The creation of this unit now provides the opportunity to develop the first action plan for events in Belfast. The action plan will allow the city to:

- Provide focus and direction for the next four years;
- Develop a more cohesive and co-ordinated approach to events in the city;
- Attract new events to the city; re-invigorate existing events and mark key anniversaries within the city's history
- Improve the quality of events in the city for residents and visitors;
- Maximise Belfast's profile and reputation as an events location and improve its competitiveness and ability to attract major events to the city;
- Contribute to Belfast's economy by generating significant economic impact;
- Contribute further to Belfast's tourism and cultural offering
- Assist other event organisers in the city through possible funding, advice and skills development opportunities;

### **Vision and Aims**

The City Events Action Plan sets out our vision, aims, objectives and actions for 2011 to 2015. Our vision for events in Belfast is that:

*Belfast will be renowned as a leading events destination with a reputation for quality and innovative events. Events will continue to generate substantial economic, cultural and social impacts, contribute to the city's positive profile and provide visitors and citizens with a choice of events making sure they have enjoyable things to see and do when in Belfast.*

In order to achieve this vision, three aims have been developed which relate to three key areas:

#### **Area 1**

Aim

#### **Events**

*For Belfast to be recognised as a city that delivers a programme of innovative and high quality events which attract and entertain residents and visitors alike*

Portfolio of our events - A key objective of this action plan is to develop the city's portfolio of events by focusing on attracting a number of major events to Belfast, continuing to deliver an annual programme of events, and developing a series of signature events for the city.

Through this action plan our objective is to bring one major event to Belfast each year from 2011 to 2015 and beyond.

We will also continue to organise a programme of annual events each year and assess the ongoing viability of each event to ensure that the events are sustainable and source additional funds to complement Council funding.

In the Belfast events programme we have a wealth of indigenous events that, through additional support, could be developed into "signature" events for the city. Through this action plan we will aim to develop four new events or support existing events to grow into "signature" events for Belfast.

Attendance - Over the four years of the action plan our objectives are to increase the overall number of people coming to our annual events, increase the average level of repeat attendance and to increase the number of visitors from outside Northern Ireland attending events.

Satisfaction Levels - High satisfaction levels are vital to the success of our events. While satisfaction levels are currently high (8.7 out of 10), we recognise the need to continually improve the quality of our events. Our objective for the next four years is to maintain satisfaction levels of at least 9 out of 10 across all our events.

## **Area 2 Capacity and capability**

**Aim** To develop the capacity and capability of Belfast to attract, deliver and market a wide range of high quality events and in doing so enhance the sustainability of the city's events sector

Marketing of events to residents and visitors - At present the marketing of events uses a generic (mass marketing) approach but this does not allow us to target particular segments of the market that are under-represented. There is potential to attract more visitors to our events; this could be done through integrating events into marketing campaigns to enhance the tourism offering of the city.

Belfast's profile as an event location - One of the key factors in being able to attract major events to Belfast is the profile of the city as an events location. There is a growing need to develop the profile of Belfast among international event organisers. In order to attract major events, Belfast must dedicate resources to building the profile of the city as an events location.

In conjunction with the key partners mentioned we will also develop an international programme of marketing activity. This will include promotional attendance at key event conferences and exhibitions in order to raise the profile of Belfast as an events location.

Growth and Sustainability - The contribution of events to the city's economy and tourist offerings is significant and it is therefore important that all events in Belfast, are assisted to grow and become more sustainable in the future. To support this there are a number of areas that the action plan will focus on over the next four years.

### **- Scheduling of Events**

Through this plan we will aim to improve the way events, particularly Council events, are scheduled throughout the year.

We will work with partners to develop a comprehensive calendar of events in Belfast which will be used to ensure that there is a more focused approach to the scheduling of events throughout the year.

### **- Physical Infrastructure**

At present Belfast does not have a large enough venue for some major events, however our strengths lie in organising and securing those events that can be held in existing venues in the city.

We need to develop a greater understanding of the physical infrastructure for events in Belfast. To do this we will undertake an audit of venues across the city and capture the information gathered in an events venue database.

The information will give us a better understanding of each venue's capacity and facilities. This will assist us when bidding for major events and in promoting Belfast as an events location.

### **- Skills Development and Best Practice**

As we aim to grow and develop events in Belfast, the success of these events will be determined by the capacity and capabilities of organisers to deliver events. For this reason it is beneficial to continually develop the skills and knowledge of event organisers in the voluntary, community and public sectors in Belfast.

As part of this action plan we will continue to support external event organisers through offering guidance and advice where possible. We will commission the development of an 'Events Development Toolkit' that can assist event organisers to enhance their skills in key areas such as marketing, income generation, event management and business planning.

Funding - Currently the City Events Unit only funds events through three processes. Smaller scale sports; major sports events funds and major event funding. In 2009 a total of £97,000 was allocated to 40 organisations through Support for Sport. Larger-scaled sports events funding over £10,000 are managed through the submission of a business plan to the City Events Unit.

It would be the intention of this action plan to review both the Support of Sport scheme and funding for larger-scaled events. This would see possible increases in events funding

### **Area 3**

Aim

### **Impact**

*To maximise the impact events have on Belfast and the economic, social and cultural benefits that they bring to the city*

Assessing the impact of events - The City Events Unit must be able to accurately assess the difference that events make to Belfast. We will develop an assessment framework which will capture detailed information on the full impact of the Council's events. The adoption of a common assessment framework will allow the impact of different events to be compared and assist in predicting outcomes for future events.

Economic Impact - An important part of an event's overall impact is its direct and indirect economic impact.

Over the four years of the action plan our objectives are to:

- To increase the economic impact of annual events in Belfast by 5% per year
- To achieve a return rate of investment for the Council of £8 for every £1 spent

In order to ensure that the assessments, which the Council commissions, capture as accurately as possible the full range of direct and indirect impacts, we will undertake a review of our existing assessments. We will continue to measure the return on investment which events have through economic impact assessments.

Social Impacts - The social impact of events is a difficult measurement to gauge. However there are a number of key factors that can be analysed such as levels of volunteering, community participation; skills development and change in residents' perception of the city. We will aim to capture information in relation to each of these areas as part of the event assessment framework and will revise our information collection methods and surveys in order to do so.

Volunteering - Many events are dependent on volunteers. They provide a valuable resource and bring to the event their skills, experience and enthusiasm.

Through this plan we will develop a programme to provide opportunities for volunteers to assist at Council and other events in the city. We will identify key events which require volunteers and provide training and mentoring opportunities in order that volunteer resources are maximised for all events within the city.

Event Champions and Ambassadors - The utilisation of key individuals to promote Belfast as a key event location is important. These 'Ambassadors/Champions' would be individuals from both public and private sectors who recognise the important role that major events can bring to Belfast and NI.

Through this action plan we will continue to work closely with all our partners and regularly engage with them in order to grow and develop events in Belfast. It is important that this action plan complements and contributes to the ongoing work and strategies of these organisations.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this Events Action Plan is to ensure that events in the City of Belfast have a positive benefit to its citizens and visitors. The Action Plan is designed to bring synergy to events organised in Belfast that in turn provide economic betterment, social impacts and positive reputational changes. These processes will only be achieved via working across and with public, private and voluntary sectors within Belfast and Northern Ireland. It will also require Belfast to work on a national basis in Ireland and the UK and developing and enhancing relationships internationally.

## **FORWARD**

Introduction by Committee Chair (optional)

Statements of support from BVCB, NITB, DCAL (optional)

## INTRODUCTION

### ***Belfast***

Despite the current economic climate Belfast in 2010 is still a strong and thriving city, driven by a robust economy, rising tourist numbers, a vibrant social and cultural life and sound political governance. The city's skyline is being transformed by new commercial, office and residential developments and a growing number of new hotels. Large areas of the city are also undergoing major regeneration. The Cathedral Quarter is being re-developed with a new state of the art cultural centre, hotels, retail and residential developments, festivals and markets. Developments in the Titanic Quarter are also well underway with the first commercial and residential properties completed. In the past few years Belfast has also grown as a tourist destination and has been described as one of the top ten cities "on the rise"<sup>2</sup>. In 2009 Belfast welcomed 9.3 million visitors who injected an estimated £451 million into the local economy.

### ***Belfast's Events***

Events in Belfast have also developed as the city has. Over the past decade Belfast City Council has developed an annual programme of events that have become synonymous with Belfast – ranging from the Titanic Made in Belfast festival and the Belfast Marathon each spring to the Taste NI Garden Party and Halloween in the autumn. These events have become firmly established within the fabric of the city, its communities and visitors. The city also hosts over 55 festivals throughout the year, many of which are funded by the Council's Tourism, Culture and Arts funding streams.

A number of large-scale events such as the Special Olympics Ireland Games, the Under 19 European Football Championships, the Under 21 Rugby World Cup, the World Irish Dancing Championships, the World Women's Open Squash Championships and the 2009 Tall Ships festival have all been held in the city. 2006 saw the biggest celebration of culture and sport in the city with the 18-month "Celebrate Belfast" programme of events.

The action plan provides guidance and input to the staging of significant events such as: the staging of the MTV EMAs in 2011; planned activity around 2012 under the Titanic and London Olympic programme; the Council's £400,000 input to the staging of the World Police and Fire Games in 2013 and bidding for major events in 2014 and 2015.

Belfast City Council, in conjunction with its partners, has played a key role in developing events in the city. Our partners include the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB), the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), the BBC, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), the Department for Social Development (DSD), event promoters, event governing bodies, service providers, the voluntary and culture and arts sectors.

In 2011-2012 year Belfast City Council's City Events Unit will spend just under £1.4m on events. This compares with:

- Cardiff who spend £2m which is financed from the City Council and other partners.
- Edinburgh City who expend £2.2m budget which is complemented with £8m from the private and public sectors (Total budget in excess of £10m).
- Glasgow City Council's Culture & Sports company has a backing of funding

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Lonely Planet

- totalling around £3.6m.
- Hull City spends £1.2m with staff costs inclusive of this figure
- Montreal City has a budget of CAN\$2m which is spent directly on events. This figure is complemented by finances from external partners
- Newcastle is estimated to spend just over £5.8m on events. This is funded from a variety of sources including the Newcastle City Council and other public bodies
- Rotterdam operates on an budget equivalent £2.4m for funding and staging events

#### Key facts.....

- Annually the Council commits in the region of circa £1.5 million to support events in the city
- The Council organises a programme of 10 events each year; in 2009 1.3 million people attended these events
- In 2009, the Council supported 40 local organisations by providing £97,000 of funding through the Support for Sport scheme
- Each year Council staff help a wide range of local events throughout the city by providing advice, support and equipment
- Each year 350 events take place in Belfast's parks including the Spring Fair and Rose Week

#### **Benefits of Events**

The role of events as positive economic and social drivers is increasingly recognised<sup>3</sup> and research from a range of academics<sup>4</sup> has also shown that events can bring a wide range of benefits to the city or location where they are held. These benefits relate to:

**Image and Profile** – events can help to promote a city, increase its profile and add to its appeal as a location to live, work, visit and study;

**Economy** – events play an important role in contributing to a healthy local economy. They can help to deliver a competitive advantage and contribute significantly to direct and indirect economic impacts;

**Tourism** – events can help to build a reputation as a tourist destination and increase visitor numbers. Events can also be the motivation for a visit<sup>5</sup>; tourists are now looking for more authentic and hands-on experiences and events underpin this by animating a destination and acting as a hook that complements existing tourism infrastructure and products;

**Social Impacts** - An important reason for encouraging events is that they can provide entertainment and memorable experiences for large numbers of people. They are an important part of the vibrancy and character of a city. Events can also have indirect social benefits through social cohesion, community participation, and a 'feel good' factor as positive images of a city are portrayed; and

**Legacy** – the legacy that events provide extends beyond the immediacy of the event. Events can and do impact on community and personal development, for example through volunteering opportunities. They also create resources to be used after an event and can also create positive perceptions long after an event is finished.

<sup>3</sup> 'North East England, Festivals and Events Strategy', One North East

<sup>4</sup> 'Festival and Special Event Management' Allen, J. et al. 2008

<sup>5</sup> The Strategy for Tourism in England's Northwest 2003 – 2010, Northwest Regional Development Agency



Belfast City Council's Integrated Tourism Strategy<sup>6</sup> sees events as one of Belfast 'successes' and these successes have an impact on the areas of: the city's profile; a boost for the local economy; increased out-of-state visitors; positive impacts with regard to social and community activity and also the fact that events can leave a lasting legacy for Belfast. Although this action plan refers to community engagement it should be noted that it does not pertain to the delivery community based events as this is outside the remit of the City Events Unit and is addressed via other sections within the Council.

### **Over the past few years events in Belfast have benefited the city in a number of ways.....**

The Council's annual programme of events brought an estimated economic impact to the city of £18 million in 2009

Events have provided a range of entertainment and memorable experiences for residents and some of the millions of people that visit the city each year

90% of people surveyed agree that events encourage people to come to Belfast

98% of people told us that there should be more events like the event they attended

Through volunteering opportunities, events like the Belfast Marathon; the Special Olympics Ireland Games and 2009 Tall Ships festival have attracted and trained over 5000 volunteers

Over 90 clubs and organisations have been able to host local, national and international events through the Support for Sport fund

93% of city centre retailers have indicated that the Council's events are positive for Belfast, while 91% retailers indicated that events were well managed and delivered<sup>7</sup>

### ***Action plan for Events***

As part of Belfast City Council's aim to deliver quality, customer-focused services, a decision was made in 2007 to integrate the Council's Sports and Civic Events units and to form the City Events Unit. This team, which is part of the Development Department's City Events and Venues Section, brings together a level of expertise and resources which will improve the planning, co-ordination and delivery of Council events across the city<sup>8</sup>.

The creation of the City Events Unit also provides the opportunity to develop the first action plan for events in Belfast. The action plan will allow the city to:

- Define the scope of events related work and provide focus and direction for the next four years;
- Develop a more cohesive and co-ordinated approach to events in the city;
- Develop the portfolio of Council led events in Belfast through attracting new events to the city and developing, re-invigorating existing events and engage the city's cultural sector and mark key anniversaries within city's historical calendar;
- Improve the quality of Council led events in the city for residents and visitors;
- Maximise Belfast's profile and reputation as an events location and improve its competitiveness and ability to attract major events to the city;

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<sup>6</sup> Belfast City Council's Integrated Strategic Framework for Belfast Tourism 2009-2014

<sup>7</sup> Belfast City Centre Management survey, January 2008

<sup>8</sup> At present the Parks and Leisure Department will continue to organise events that are held in Belfast's parks and open spaces. There will be liaison between the City Events and its colleagues within Parks and Leisure to ensure a synergy of events delivered

- Contribute to Belfast's economy by generating significant economic impact through events;
- Contribute further to Belfast's tourism and cultural offering and providing a range of events to encourage visitors to come to Belfast at all times of the year;
- Improve the marketing and promotion of Council led events;
- Assist other event organisers in the city through grants, advice and skills development opportunities; and
- Develop and strengthen relationships with partners such as BVCB, NITB, DSD, Sport NI, ACNI, DCAL and Tourism Ireland, event promoters, event governing bodies, service providers, the voluntary, community and culture and arts sectors.

### ***Strategic Context***

The City Events Unit works with several partners to develop and promote events in Belfast. Within the Council we work closely with the Chief Executive's Office, Tourism, Culture and Arts, Good Relations, Tourism, Parks and Leisure, Corporate Communications and Environmental Health. Externally we work with various public, cultural and voluntary sector groups and the partners outlined above. Through this action plan we will continue to work closely with all our partners and regularly engage with them in order to grow and develop events in Belfast.

Recognising the close working relationship the City Events Unit has with its partners, it is important that this action plan compliments and contributes to the ongoing work and strategies of these organisations. Through the City Events Action plan we will aim to do this by:

- Providing exciting and enjoyable events that can contribute to 'improving the quality of life' for residents of Belfast and Northern Ireland;
- Ensuring our events are accessible to all sections of the community and allow for community where applicable;
- Showcasing where possible the best of Belfast and Northern Ireland's cultural and sporting talent;
- Developing events that are attractive to tourists and that contribute to their reason for visiting Belfast;
- Developing sustainable events that create and grow employment opportunities; and
- Contributing to the economy of Belfast and Northern Ireland by maximising the economic and social benefits of events.

## Vision and Aims

The City Events Action Plan sets out our vision, aims, objectives and actions for 2011 to 2015. Our vision and aims are set out below. The following chapters describe how we will achieve each aim and its associated objectives.

A plan detailing how the objectives will be delivered is appended to the action plan.

### ***Vision***

Our vision for events in Belfast is that:

*Belfast will be renowned as a leading events destination with a reputation for quality and innovative events. Events will continue to generate substantial economic, cultural and social impacts, contribute to the city's positive profile and provide visitors and citizens with a choice of events making sure they have enjoyable things to see and do when in Belfast.*

### ***Aims***

In order to achieve this vision, three aims have been developed. These relate to three key areas:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Aim</b>
Events	For Belfast to be recognised as a city that delivers a programme of innovative and high quality events which attract and entertain residents and visitors alike
Capacity and Capability	To develop the capacity and capability of Belfast to attract, deliver and market a wide range of high quality events and in doing so enhance the sustainability of the city's events sector
Impact	To maximise the impact events have on Belfast and the economic, social and cultural benefits that they bring to the city

The following chapters focus on each of the three aims. Our activities and achievements to date are discussed and we outline how we plan to achieve each aim over the next four years through setting and delivering on a range of objectives and focused activities.

## events

***Aim: For Belfast to be recognised as a city that delivers a programme of innovative and high quality events which attract and entertain residents and visitors alike***

### ***Our Portfolio of Events***

A key objective of this action plan is to develop the city's portfolio of events by focusing on attracting a number of major events to Belfast, continuing to deliver an annual programme of events, and developing a series of signature events for the city.

### **Major Events**

A major event can be defined as one which is held on a large scale, attracts a considerable number of visitors, participants and media interest and generates a substantial economic impact for the surrounding area<sup>9</sup>. Examples of major events that have been held in Belfast in the past few years include the World Irish Dancing Championships, U19 European Football Championships, Special Olympics Ireland Games, U21 World Cup Rugby, World Amateur Boxing Championships, the Commonwealth Fencing Championships and the 2009 Tall Ships festival. In the future we want to continue to bring major events to Belfast. Preparations are at an advanced stage for the World Police and Firefighter Games will be held in the city in 2013. Through this action plan our objective is to bring one major event to Belfast each year from 2011 to 2015 and beyond.

Major events take a long time to source, evaluate and secure and in doing so require significant Council resources and the assistance of our partners. The decision to bid for a major event is only made after an exhaustive assessment of the event's history and feasibility and consultation with venues, associations, sponsors, the media and public sector bodies.

At present we attract major events to the city by visiting event exhibitions and a number of major events each year to meet with event organisers. However we recognise the need to develop a more strategic approach to bidding for and securing major events. Through this action plan we will do this by:

- Continually monitoring major events taking place in the UK, Europe and worldwide.
- Developing a framework of criteria to inform the decision making process of bidding for an event. These criteria will be based around an event's ability to:
  - demonstrate economic and social impact;
  - leave a lasting legacy;
  - enhance the profile of Belfast;
  - increase the status of Belfast as a place to live and visit; and
  - demonstrate the capacity of Belfast to host the event.
  - using the framework to assess 10 major events each year and identify those to bid for
  - Dedicating staff to lead and support the bidding process for major events
  - Bidding for one major event each year

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<sup>9</sup> Events Management 1999, Bowdin et al

- Continuing to provide support to other organisations who take the lead on bidding for major events; and
- Working with colleagues in BCC's Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit and NITB in their event planning

## Annual Events

Each year the City Events Unit organises between nine and eleven events in Belfast; these are the core events in the Council's annual calendar. The events are well established and are generally classified as 'broadly' cultural events, many of which coincide with public holidays and key occasions in the city's calendar. Through the annual events programme the Council aims to animate and showcase the city, create a vibrant atmosphere for residents and visitors, attract and involve the city's cultural sector, engage local communities and generate an economic impact.

Annual events are funded by the Council, with additional funds coming from sponsorship and grant applications. The events are generally free to access for the public and as such there is limited financial return for the Council. However they do generate a substantial economic impact for the city, typically £6 million a year – although peaks and troughs exist with the 2009-2010 figure in excess of £18 million. In 2010 the events attracted an audience in excess of 1.3 million people.

Annual Events	
St Patrick's Day	Taste NI Garden Party
Titanic Made in Belfast	Belfast Maritime Festival
Halloween	Belfast Marathon
Christmas	Belfast City Carnival - Introducing the New Lord Mayor

Through this action plan the City Events Unit will continue to organise a programme of annual events each year. We will also:

- Assess the ongoing viability of each event to ensure that it meets the vision of the Council and its aims; that events are delivered in an efficient and effective manner and represents value for money for the Council;
- Ensure that the events are sustainable and source additional funds to complement Council funding. We will examine ways of maximising income (through commercial opportunities, sponsorship and cross working with partners) maximising the marketing and promotion of events and arrangements with event service providers.

## Signature and major one-off events

The competition for attendees at events is becoming increasingly challenging as the number and quality of events grow in Belfast and other local, national and international locations. In order to attract attendees, events are becoming increasingly innovative with rising standards in the delivery and programming. Often the most successful and attractive events are those that stand out as being unique and distinctive. They are also events that cannot be found in other locations because they celebrate the indigenous heritage and culture of a place. These events also have a greater appeal to tourists as they can associate them with a visit to a particular city or location.

In the Belfast events programme we have a wealth of indigenous events that through additional support could be developed into “signature” events for the city – i.e. events that are unique and distinct to Belfast, are innovative, represent quality and celebrate our heritage and culture. Through this action plan we will aim to develop four new events or support existing events to grow into “signature” events for Belfast. The aim would be to develop the capacity to create events in regards to key anniversary dates e.g. Titanic 2012 centenary. It will be essential to develop a plan that identifies pertinent anniversaries that are relevant and that meet key events output criteria.

### **Attendance**

Major events in the past few years have attracted a large number of attendees - over 17,000 people attended the World Irish Dancing Championships in 2008; 20,000 attended the U19 European Soccer tournament; 15,000 witnessed the U21 World Cup Rugby, 3,500 attended the Special Olympics Ireland Games and nearly 1,000 crew were involved in the 2009 Tall Ships event, while the audience was estimated at over 750,000 people.

The majority of attendees at the Council’s annual events are from the Belfast area, with significant numbers also attending from the rest of Northern Ireland. The number of attendees at events from outside Northern Ireland varies depending on the time of year and the nature of the event. In 2010 they were highest at the Titanic Made in Belfast Festival (51% of those surveyed) and on average just over 12% of attendees are from outside Northern Ireland.

Attracting people back to annual events every year is a key to growing attendance levels. In 2006 we began monitoring levels of repeat attendance at annual events. Survey results show that repeat attendance levels at events are over 40% and those surveyed also have high intentions to revisit events (an average of 74%)<sup>10</sup>.

### **Event Attendees<sup>11</sup>...**

- Men and women equally attend events – on average 50% are male and 50% female
- People of all ages come to events however approximately 80%<sup>12</sup> are between the ages of 16 and 54
- Families make up the largest group of attendees (40%)
- Two-thirds of attendees are from a middle-class background<sup>13</sup>
- 51% of attendees are from Belfast, 37% from the rest of NI and 12% from outside Northern Ireland

<sup>10</sup> Figures based on average of 2006 and 2007 attendance at BCC annual events

<sup>11</sup> Figures based on average of 2006 and 2007 attendance at BCC annual events

<sup>12</sup> Only those aged 16+ are surveyed

<sup>13</sup> ABC1 background

Over the four years of the action plan our objectives are to:

- increase the overall number of people coming to our annual events by 5% each year;
- increase the average level of repeat attendance at annual events to 55% by 2015; and
- increase the number of visitors from outside Northern Ireland attending events by 5% each year.

In order to increase attendance levels we will:

- Examine the effectiveness of previous marketing campaigns using information captured through event surveys;
- Identify market segments that are under-represented and create a marketing plan to address these;
- Utilise the calendar of events to improve the scheduling and maximise attendance numbers at events;
- Improve the quality of events by responding to suggestions made by event attendees and suppliers;
- Undertake research to understand the factors that driver repeat attendance at events; and
- Work with BVCB, NITB and Tourism Ireland to promote events to increase the number visitors from outside Northern Ireland coming to events.

### ***Satisfaction Levels***

High satisfaction levels are also vital to the success of our events and encouraging repeat attendance. Through event surveys we capture a variety of information on satisfaction levels; attendees are asked to rate different elements of the event, say whether it met their expectations and if they would recommend the event to others. Recent survey results show that satisfaction levels are high – the average event rating between 2008 and 2010 was 8.7 out of 10.

Event surveys also capture attendees' suggestions as to how specific elements of the events can be improved – suggestions range from improved access to more varied entertainment and better facilities. Internally we also prepare post event reports to highlight areas where we can improve events in subsequent years.

While satisfaction levels are currently high, we recognise the need to continually improve the quality of our events. Our objective for the next four years is to maintain satisfaction levels of at least 9 out of 10 across all our events. We will also review the information that is captured in relation to satisfaction levels to ensure that it is event specific and can provide information on key indicators of satisfaction such as facilities, appropriateness of entertainment, transport systems, waste management, etc. We will continue to use the information gathered to implement feasible suggestions made by attendees to improve events. We will also work with event service providers and partners on an ongoing basis to improve the quality of services (e.g. catering, transport and facilities) at Council events.

## **Summary of Objectives**

### **Key Objectives**

- 1.1 By 2015 to develop Belfast City Council's portfolio of events by:
  - hosting one major high quality event each year;
  - delivering a programme of annual events each year; and
  - increasing the innovate nature of events by developing four events by 2015 that are unique to Belfast and which can be seen as "signature" events for the city<sup>14</sup>
  - develop the capacity to create events programmes in regard to key anniversary dates e.g. Titanic 2012 centenary
- 1.2 To grow attendance at Belfast City Council events by 5% each year
- 1.3 To increase the average level repeat attendance at annual events to 55% by 2015
- 1.4 To increase the number of visitors from outside Northern Ireland attending events by 5% by 2015
- 1.5 To maintain satisfaction levels of at least 9 out of 10 across all Council events

### **Associated Objectives**

- 2.1 To enhance the marketing of events and introduce targeted marketing initiatives
- 2.4 For BCC to assist the growth and sustainability of events in Belfast by encouraging, working with and supporting event organisers in the city
- 2.6 To ensure resource levels are appropriate to enable the City Events Unit to lead and support bidding for major events

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<sup>14</sup> By 2013 the Council's annual programme will consist of a number of annual events inclusive of four additional events that will be deemed 'signature events'. These events will be of a stature and size that will define them as unique events for the City of Belfast.



## Capacity and capability

***Aim: To develop the capacity and capability of Belfast to attract, deliver and market a wide range of high quality events and in doing so enhance the sustainability of the city's events sector***

### ***Marketing of Events***

#### **Marketing of events to residents**

Our marketing of events to residents (of Belfast and NI) utilises a variety of channels – newspapers, billboards, radio and TV and the Council and gotobelfast websites. At present the marketing of events uses a generic (mass marketing) approach, and while this is successful in promoting an awareness of events and encouraging attendance, it does not allow us to target particular segments of the market that are under-represented.

Each year we gather information about the profile of attendees at certain events through event surveys and economic impact studies; this includes information about the origin of attendees, party size and attendees' expenditure. The results of these studies allow us to identify which sections of the community are represented at events – for example young people, adults over 65 and out-of-state visitors.

#### **Marketing of events to visitors**

Events can make a positive contribution to the decision to visit a city and on the overall enjoyment of the experience. In marketing events to visitors the Council works closely with BVCB to promote events through channels such as the gotobelfast website, the What About guide and the Council's own publications such as, City Matters.

It is clear that through Belfast City Council's Integrated Tourism Strategy that events can be a motivating factor<sup>5</sup>. While Belfast's events attract a certain amount of out of state visitors, Tourism Monitor results show that at present events are not significant motivating factors in the decision to visit the city. However over half of all visitors are drawn to Belfast to holiday and to enjoy Belfast's scenery and relaxing ambiance. Research also shows that certain events (particularly the Titanic Made in Belfast and the Maritime Festival) do attract substantial numbers of people from outside Northern Ireland. There is therefore the potential to attract more visitors to our events; this could be done through integrating events into marketing campaigns to enhance the tourism offering of the city.

Through this action plan we will develop a more focused approach to the marketing of events. We will undertake to:

- Better understand the effectiveness of Belfast current event marketing campaigns to residents and make improvements where possible;
- Identify effective marketing from current and previous events and utilise this to improve marketing at events in the future;
- Identify and target key resident segments that are under-represented and develop marketing initiatives to increase attendance from these segments;
- Develop and launch one targeted initiative each year; and

- Work with Belfast City Council's Corporate Communication, BVCB, NITB and Tourism Ireland to enhance the marketing and promotion of events to visitors and through this to increase the number of people surveyed in the Tourism Monitor that cite events as a reason for visiting Belfast.

### ***Belfast's Profile as an Event Location***

One of the key factors in being able to attract major events to Belfast is the profile of the city as an events location. Belfast's international profile has developed greatly in the past few years thanks to factors such as the restoration of the regional government and the investments that have taken place in commercial developments, infrastructure and jobs. Our tourism profile has also increased rapidly (9.3 million visitors in 2009); as has the profile and popularity of the city as a conference location (73,000 conference visitors came to Belfast in 2009).

While Belfast has secured a number of major events in the past few years, there is a growing need to develop the profile of Belfast among international event organisers, in the same way that the city has developed in other areas. Events are seen as a highly competitive global industry<sup>15</sup> with many cities and countries establishing separate organisations which are responsible for actively targeting and attracting events that can provide substantial economic impact and/or international profile. In order to attract major events, Belfast too must dedicate resources to building the profile of the city as an events location.

There are a number of ways in which we currently work to grow the profile of Belfast as an events location and attract major events. Attendance at event exhibitions provides the Council with access to a number of key events and event organisers. In addition it would be the intention to meet with event organisers to assess the potential and interest levels of bringing these events to Belfast. However, we recognise the need to be more strategic in our approach towards targeting major events.

Firstly we will work to create and establish an event stakeholder group that will assist in the oversight of events delivery in the city.

Secondly, we will work with our partners within Council and externally, especially NITB, BVCB and Tourism Ireland and undertake research to understand the current profile of Belfast as an events location. We will gather information about the perception of the city among event organisers and about barriers to hosting events in the city. We will then agree how best to grow Belfast's profile and draw up an action plan to address the issues raised.

In conjunction with the key partners mentioned we will also develop an international programme of marketing activity. This will include promotional attendance at key event conferences and exhibitions in order to raise the profile of Belfast as an events location. This will tie in with existing marketing activity and to the overall branding and promotion of Belfast as a city.

### ***Communications***

As well as developing the profile of Belfast as an events location, it is also important at the same time to build the profile and reputation of Belfast's events both locally and further afield. In order to do this we will work with the Council's Corporate Communications, NITB, BVCB and Tourism Ireland to develop a Communications Plan for our major, annual and signature events. The plan will leverage the synergy of marketing and public relations to create more public interest and attendance at events than would otherwise be achieved on its own.

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<sup>15</sup> A Strategy for Major Events in England's Northwest, Northwest Development Agency, March 2004

We will also link in with the ongoing work of our tourism partners (BVCB, NITB and Tourism Ireland) to develop relationships with local, national and international media and key influencers (e.g. journalists and travel editors) and encourage them to visit Belfast and experience and subsequently promote our events. We will also develop our communications with the media through press packs and e-marketing to inform them about key events, developments and event opportunities. By 2011 we will profile a position within the City Events Unit to co-ordinate marketing and liaise with the media and sponsorship.

### ***Growth and Sustainability***

The contribution of events to the city's economy and tourist offerings is significant and it is therefore important that all events in Belfast<sup>5</sup>, and not just the Councils, are assisted to grow and become more sustainable in the future. To support this there are a number of areas that the action plan will focus on over the next four years.

### **Scheduling of Events**

Through this plan we will aim to improve the way events, particularly Council events, are scheduled throughout the year. The scheduling of events is important for a number of reasons:

- It ensures that a broad range of events are programmed throughout the year, providing variety and interest for attendees;
- It helps to reduce the seasonality of the tourism offering by ensuring that there is a reason for visitors to come to Belfast at all times of the year;
- It helps to ensure that large events do not coincide or overlap at specific times of the year, or that if they do 'clash' they create a critical mass that makes Belfast more attractive for the residents and visitors; and
- The scheduling of events can be crucial to maximising attendance and social, cultural and economic impacts.

It is important, therefore, that when an event is timetabled not only its position in the year, but also its positioning against the calendar of events around it is considered.

We will work with partners to develop a comprehensive calendar of events in Belfast which will be used to ensure that there is a more focused approach to the scheduling of events throughout the year. The calendar can also help with the many enquiries we receive from other event organisers about the timing of events in the city. We will also work with all our internal and external partners and other event organisers to co-ordinate a more strategic approach to the developing and scheduling of events.

### **Physical Infrastructure**

The size, capacity and facilities of venues are a contributing factor in where the Council holds its events and in securing major events for Belfast. While some events require one large scale venue, others can be held in a number of smaller venues. At present Belfast does not have a large enough venue for some major events, however our strengths lie in organising and securing those events that can be held in existing venues in the city.

The Council holds events in a variety of locations across the city each year, both indoors and outdoors in public spaces. Our knowledge of Belfast's event venues is based upon information gathered from Council and non-Council bodies however at present it is incomplete. We therefore need to develop a greater understanding of

the physical infrastructure for events in Belfast. To do this we will undertake an audit of venues across the city and capture the information gathered in an events venue database.

The information gathered:

- Will give us a better understanding of each venue's capacity and facilities. It will also enable the Council to judge a venue's capacity to host certain events and earmark areas that may require upgrading and or investment in order to accommodate certain events;
- Will assist us when bidding for major events and in promoting Belfast as an events location to event organisers. It will also enable the Council to consider holding events across a wider geographic area of Belfast rather than just the city centre; and
- Could also be of benefit to others. We will engage with venues across the city to feedback the results of the audit and we will also make the information gathered available when requested by other event organisers and promoters.

### **Skills Development and Best Practice**

As we aim to grow and develop events in Belfast, the success of these events will not only be determined by their range and scale, but also by the capacity and capabilities of organisers to deliver events. We must also meet the demands of major event promoters/organisers and the high standards they expect. For this reason it is beneficial to continually develop the skills and knowledge of event organisers in Belfast.

The City Events Unit will continue to develop its capabilities through addressing skills gaps and availing of training and development opportunities. These skills will in turn be used to inform and direct events across the city.

At present Council staff provides a variety of assistance to event organisers through the Support for Sport scheme and other non-sporting events. As part of this action plan we will continue to support external event organisers through offering guidance and advice where possible. In order to provide more structured assistance to external event organisers we will commission the development of an 'Events Development Toolkit' that can assist event organisers to enhance their skills in key areas such as marketing, income generation, event management and business planning. Thus assisting a wide variety of event organisers, such as community groups, volunteer organisations and non-professional event groups, in the planning, management and delivery of events, without physically delivering the events, which the City Events Unit would does not have the capacity or remit to do so.

Developments outside Belfast and Northern Ireland can also help to improve our knowledge of organising and promoting events. We will continue to build our relationships with local the event and cultural and work with all our key partners. In addition we will build relationships with national and international event organisers and associations such Sports UK, International Festival and Events Association, National Outdoor Events Association (UK), Irish Festivals and Events Association and the Centre for Festivals and Event Management, to learn about best practice and new methods that may benefit events in Belfast. The information we gather will be shared internally and externally to benefit all those involved in events in the city.

### **Funding**

*Currently the City Events Unit finances the staging of events through a number of processes. These strands are – the financial delivery and management of Council events; the funding of smaller scale sports events through the Support for Sport*

*scheme; funding of major sports events funds and major event funding via bidding budgets.*

Small scale sports events are funded through the Council's Support for Sport scheme. Grants can be obtained up to a maximum of £10,000. Sports events organisers complete grant application and are scored against the following criteria.

Organisational experience and capacity to deliver the event

Future development of sport

Ability to market and promote through the media

Economic impact the event would have for Belfast both from spectators and tourists

Development plans for the event and the legacy impact for the city

All funding from the Support for Sport scheme would be paid to applicants only after post-event details are submitted with detailed budgets. In 2009 a total of £97,000 was allocated to 40 organisations through Support for Sport. Larger-scaled sports events funding over £10,000 are managed through the submission of a business plan to the City Events Unit. Details are assessed and then presented for approval to Council.

It would be the intention of this action plan to review both the Support of Sport scheme and funding for larger-scaled sports in conjunction with the Council's Parks and Leisure Department and other relevant internal and external bodies. The concept is not to develop new funding strands, but rather to focus on more efficient and affective methods of assisting groups to stage events.

*The bidding for major international events is a process that requires resources not just to put Belfast's name in front of those organisations who own the rights to such events, it also has significant finances attached to the delivery of such events. Therefore, the action plan will take recognition of these costs.*

## ***Summary of Objectives***

### ***Key Objectives***

- 2.1 To enhance the marketing of events and introduce targeted marketing initiatives
- 2.2 To work with our partners to market and grow the profile of Belfast as an events location for event organisers by creating an events stakeholder group
- 2.3 To develop positive communications with partners and the media to enhance the reputation of Belfast and its events
- 2.4 To assist the growth and sustainability of events in Belfast by encouraging, working with and supporting event organisers in the city
- 2.5 To develop the capabilities and address skills gaps through training and development opportunities for events organisations
- 2.6 To review both the Support of Sport scheme and funding for larger-scaled sports in conjunction with the Council's Parks and Leisure Department and other relevant external bodies
- 2.7 To develop clear financial commitments to the bidding, securing and delivery of major international events

## Impact

***Aim: To maximise the impact events have on Belfast and the economic, social and cultural benefits that they bring to the city***

### ***Assessing the impact of events***

Over the last five years Belfast City Council has consistently collected information on the performance of its events in the city<sup>16</sup>. This information has been collated from a variety of different sources using different data capture methods; for this reason the information collected is not always directly comparable and therefore does not provide us with a comprehensive understanding of the full impact of our events. In addition, there is no standardised method of capturing the impact of other events that take place in the city.

There is therefore a need to implement a more structured and systematic approach to determining the impact of events and in understanding more accurately the true value of events to the city. Assessing the full impacts of events is a difficult task, and requires a variety of elements to be taken into account. These include, but are not limited to:

- the economic impact;
- the benefit to a city or location's image, reputation and perception;
- the social impact and improvements to quality of life for both visitors and residents; and
- the legacy of an event.

The City Events Unit must be able to accurately assess the difference that events make to Belfast. We will therefore review the information we currently gather and the methods of doing so. We will also develop an assessment framework<sup>17</sup> which will capture detailed information on the full impact of the Council's events. The assessment will take into account the following:

- Attendee profile;
- Length of stay;
- Numbers of delegates, media, supporting staff participating in the event;
- Event organisers expenditure;
- Attendee and visitor expenditure;
- Shifts in perception of Belfast as a venue for major events
- Media coverage including the equivalent value of a marketing campaign to secure the level of coverage;
- Quality of experience including satisfaction with and image of the event
- Benefits to Belfast and NI businesses; and
- Expenditure lost through displacement (i.e. "lost business").

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<sup>16</sup> Information captured relates to areas such as economic impact, out-of-state visitor numbers, perceptions and satisfaction levels

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix II for draft framework

The framework will subsequently be used to carry out impact surveys at BCC and other events.

We will work with existing survey research undertaken by the Council, BVCB (e.g. the Tourism Monitor) and NITB and adapt the information currently collected where necessary. We will also work with other event organisers, such as BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, BCC's Parks and Leisure and others in the events and cultural sectors to develop a standardised way of assessing the impact of their events in the city.

The adoption of a common assessment framework will also allow the impact of different events to be compared and assist in predicting outcomes for future events. The ability to establish these areas of comparability (as well as differences) is important in gaining an overall view of events in Belfast and in making assessments about the size and characteristics for future events that Belfast may host.

The assessment framework will be reviewed after one year to assess its effect and changes will be implemented where necessary. Subsequently an annual report will be prepared which will summarise the impact of events in Belfast.

### **Economic Impact**

An important part of an event's overall impact is its direct and indirect economic impact. Economic impact assessment methodologies are well tried and tested techniques for estimating the effect that additional expenditure has upon the economy. The task is to be able to calculate the impacts, taking into account the effects of direct and indirect expenditure resulting from the event and induced expenditure and displacements, using acknowledged multipliers.

In Scotland for tourism and arts events, multipliers were developed in the early 1990s under the Scottish Tourism Multiplier Study (STMS) but there is a choice about using different multipliers against different forms of expenditure – e.g. food and drink, accommodation or travel. At present the economic impact assessments carried out for the Council use 0.8 as the multiplier.

Over the four years of the action plan our objectives are to:

- To increase the economic impact of annual events in Belfast by 5% per year
- To achieve a return rate of investment for the Council of £8 for every £1 spent

In order to ensure that the assessments, which the Council commissions, capture as accurately as possible the full range of direct and indirect impacts we will undertake a review of our existing assessments and incorporate additional elements where necessary with both internal and external partners of the Council. We will continue to measure the return on investment which events have through economic impact assessments.

### **Social Impacts**

The social impact of events is a difficult measurement to gauge. However there are number of key factors that can be analysed such as levels of volunteering (see below); community participation; skills development and change in residents' perception of the city. We will aim to capture information in relation to each of these areas as part of the event assessment framework and will revise our information collection methods and surveys in order to do so.

#### ***Volunteering***

Many events, both community and major events, are dependent on volunteers. They provide a valuable resource and bring to the event their skills, experience and enthusiasm. Volunteers have helped to deliver a number of events in Belfast over the past few years;



most notably the Special Olympics Games Ireland, Belfast Marathon, Maritime Festival and Tall Ships.

Through this plan we will develop a programme to provide opportunities for volunteers to assist at Council and other events in the city. We will do this by working with event organisers and volunteer bodies to establish a database of groups and individuals that are willing to volunteer at events. We will identify key events which require volunteers and provide training and mentoring opportunities in order that volunteer resources are maximised for all events within the city.

### ***Event Champions and Ambassadors***

The utilisation of key individuals to promote Belfast as a key event location is important. These 'Ambassadors/Champions' would be individuals from both public and private sectors who recognise the important role that major events can bring to Belfast and NI. It would be the intention of this plan to work with key partners, particularly NITB and Tourism Ireland, to identify these individuals within the national and international events market.

### ***Summary of Objectives***

#### ***Key Objectives***

- 3.1 To better understand the value of events to Belfast by improving the quality of information gathered in relation to the impact and benefits of events
- 3.2 To increase the economic impact of annual events in Belfast to 5% per year
- 3.3 Achieve a return rate of investment for the Council of £8 for every £1 spent by 2015
- 3.4 To gather information on the social impacts of Council events
- 3.5 To increase volunteering opportunities available at Council events
- 3.6 To appoint three individuals to act as Event Champions and Ambassadors

## **ACTION PLAN**

This document is supported by a detailed action plan that will facilitate the delivery and achievement of aims and objectives. An action plan for the four years is set out at Appendix I and covers the period from 2011 to 2015.

**Appendix I**  
**Action Plan – 2011 – 2015**

***Aim: For Belfast to be recognised as a city that delivers a programme of innovative and high quality events which attracts and entertains residents and visitors alike***

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>*Timescale/Costs</b>
1.1	By 2011 to develop Belfast City Council's portfolio of events by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hosting one "major" high profile event each year from 2011 to 2015 and beyond;</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continually monitor all major UK, EU and worldwide events</li> <li>To develop a framework of criteria to inform the decision making process of bidding for an event</li> <li>Each year identify and assess (through the above framework) 10 major events</li> <li>Each year to bid for one major event</li> <li>Dedicating staff to lead and support the bidding process for major events</li> </ol>	<p>Framework developed by December 2011</p> <p>To secure one major event for Belfast each year from 2011 to 2015</p>	<p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p>	<p>BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, NITB, Tourism Ireland and external event partners</p>	<p>2011 – 2014</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2011 – 2014</p> <p>2011 – 2014</p> <p>2011-2015</p>

	Objectives	Actions	Target	Lead	Support	*Timescale/Costs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>delivering a calendar of annual events each year;</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To deliver a significant number annual events each year</li> <li>Assess the viability of each event on a yearly basis to ensure that it meets the vision and aims of the action plan, is delivered in an efficient and effective manner and represents value for money</li> <li>Examine ways of maximising income, marketing and promotion of events.</li> </ol>	<p>Ensure that existing pre and post event evaluation reports to incorporate action plans and objectives</p>	<p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p>	<p>BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, NITB, Tourism Ireland and external event partners</p>	<p>2011-2015</p> <p>2011-2015</p> <p>2012-2013</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increasing the innovative nature of events by developing four annual events by 2015 that are unique to Belfast and which can be seen as signature events for the city.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify four events that have the ability to become “signature” events for the city</li> <li>To launch one event in 2011, one event in 2012 and a third by 2014</li> <li>To continue to provide support to other organisations who take the lead on bidding for major events</li> </ol>	<p>Four events identified</p> <p>To deliver one signature event by 2011</p>	<p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p>	<p>BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, NITB, Tourism Ireland and external event partners</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>2011-2014</p> <p>2011-2015</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop the capacity to create events programmes in</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to develop a plan that identifies pertinent anniversaries that are</li> </ol>	<p>By June 2011 develop an outline plan that shows pertinent Belfast anniversaries</p>	<p>City Events Unit</p>	<p>BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, NITB,</p>	<p>2011</p>

	Objectives	Actions	Target	Lead	Support	*Timescale/Costs
	regard to key anniversary dates e.g. Titanic 2012 centenary	relevant and that meet key events output criteria	that meets an agreed Council events output criteria		Tourism Ireland and external event partners	
1.2	To grow attendance at annual events by 5% each year from 2011	<p>1. To understand the effectiveness of current marketing campaigns at encouraging attendance at events using information captured through event surveys</p> <p>2. To identify market segments that are under-represented and create a marketing plan to address these</p> <p>3. To utilise the calendar of events (see objective 2.4) to improve the scheduling of events to maximise attendance</p> <p>4. To improve the quality of events to maximise attendance by responding to feasible suggestions made by event attendees and suppliers</p> <p>5. To continue to capture attendance at events and</p>	<p>Internal research to be completed</p> <p>Marketing plan to be completed</p> <p>Improved scheduling of events</p> <p>Suggestions to be implemented</p> <p>Improved methods of capturing attendance levels</p>	<p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p>	<p>BCC Corporate Communications, BVCB and NITB</p> <p>BCC Corporate Communications, BVCB and NITB</p> <p>BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, NITB, Tourism Ireland and external event partners</p> <p>BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts and NITB</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2011</p> <p>2011</p>

	Objectives	Actions	Target	Lead	Support	*Timescale/Costs
		improve tracking systems where possible				
1.3	To increase the average level of repeat attendance at annual events to 55% by 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To undertake research to understand the factors that drive repeat attendance at events</li> <li>To improve the quality of events to maximise attendance by responding to feasible suggestions made by event attendees and suppliers</li> </ol>	<p>Internal research ongoing</p> <p>Suggestions to be implemented</p>	<p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p>	<p>BCC City Events and Venues, Tourism, Culture and Arts, NITB, Tourism Ireland and external partners</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>2011-2013</p>
1.4	To increase the number of visitors from outside Northern Ireland attending events by 5% each year from 2011	<p>As per Objective 1.2:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand the effectiveness of current marketing campaigns at encouraging attendance at events using information captured through event surveys</li> <li>To identify market segments that are under-represented and create a marketing plan to address these</li> <li>To increase the number of people surveyed in the Tourism Monitor that cite events as a reason for visiting Belfast</li> </ol>	<p>Internal research ongoing</p> <p>Marketing plan ongoing</p> <p>To create a baseline target figure</p>	<p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p>	<p>BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, NITB, Tourism Ireland and external event partners</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>June 2011</p> <p>2011-2015</p>
1.5	To maintain satisfaction levels of at least 9 out of 10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To review the information captured in visitor surveys in relation to satisfaction</li> </ol>	Review to be completed	City Events Unit	BCC City Events	June 2011

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>*Timescale/Costs</b>
	across all events	<p>levels and to improve this where possible</p> <p>2. To implement feasible suggestions on an ongoing basis made by attendees to improve events</p> <p>3. To work with event service providers and partners to improve the quality of services</p>	<p>Suggestions to be implemented</p> <p>Suggestions to be implemented</p>	<p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p>	<p>and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, NITB, Tourism Ireland and external event partners</p>	<p>2011-2013</p> <p>2012 – 2013</p>



***Aim: To develop the capacity and capability of Belfast to attract, deliver and market a wide range of high quality events and in doing so enhance the sustainability of the city's events***

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>*Timescale/Costs</b>
2.1	To enhance the marketing of events, develop a focused approach and introduce targeted marketing initiatives	1. To understand the effectiveness of current marketing campaigns	Undertake internal research on current marketing campaigns	City Events Unit	BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, NITB, Tourism Ireland and external partners	August 2011
		2. To identify effective marketing from previous and current BCC events and to utilise this to improve marketing at other events	Implement best practice from events	City Events Unit		August 2011
		3. To identify in conjunction with partners key resident segments and the effectiveness of current marketing activities in reaching these segments.	Undertake internal research on current marketing activities to segments	City Events Unit		August 2011
		4. In conjunction with partners to identify specific resident segments to target across the event calendar each year	Target segments to be identified	City Events Unit		September 2011
		5. To develop and launch one targeted initiative in conjunction with partners in 2011-2015	Initiatives to be launched	City Events Unit		2011-2015
		To evaluate the success of these marketing initiatives	Internal evaluation to be complete	City Events Unit		March 2012

	Objectives	Actions	Target	Lead	Support	*Timescale/Costs
		through event surveys				
2.2	To work with our key partners to market and grow the profile of Belfast as an events location for event organisers	<p>1. Create and establish an event stakeholder group that will assist in the oversight of events delivery in the city</p> <p>2. In conjunction with key partners to undertake research to understand the current profile of Belfast as an events location</p> <p>3. In conjunction with key partners to consider and agree how best to grow the profile of Belfast as an events destination</p> <p>4. To develop and launch an international programme of marketing activity for event organisers from 2011 to 2015 in order to raise the profile of Belfast as an event location</p> <p>5. To evaluate the success of the marketing activity</p>	<p>Creation of partner stakeholder group</p> <p>Undertake internal research</p> <p>Action plan to be developed with partners</p> <p>Programme launched by June 2011</p> <p>Internal evaluation report complete</p>	<p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p>	<p>BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, BVCB, NITB, Tourism Ireland and external event partners</p>	<p>July 2011</p> <p>August 2011</p> <p>2010 – 2011</p> <p>May 2013</p> <p>May 2012</p>

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>*Timescale/Costs</b>
2.3	To develop positive communications with key partners and the media to build the profile and enhance the reputation of Belfast and its events	<p>1. In conjunction with BCC Corporate Communications to develop and implement a communications plan for the period of the events action plan</p> <p>2. To evaluate the success of the communications plan through key indicators such as media tracking</p> <p>3. Corporate Communications to introduce and deliver PR campaigns for signature events in 2011 to 2015 with influencers</p> <p>4. To identify key media influencers (BCC –locally, BVCB/Tourism Ireland nationally and internationally) and target them to visit and experience events in Belfast with a view to promoting them</p> <p>5. To work with BVCB/Tourism Ireland on an ongoing basis to encourage journalists on</p>	<p>Communications plan developed by June 2011</p> <p>Internal evaluation report completed each year</p> <p>PR campaigns delivered</p> <p>Media influencers identified and targeted</p> <p>Five journalists per year to attend events</p> <p>E-marketing communications sent quarterly from July</p>	<p>Corporate Communications</p> <p>City Events Unit with Corporate Communications</p> <p>City Events Unit with Corporate Communications</p> <p>City Events Unit with Corporate Communications</p> <p>City Events Unit with Corporate Communications</p> <p>City Events Unit with Corporate Communications</p>	<p>BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, BVCB, NITB, Tourism Ireland and external event partners</p> <p>BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, BVCB, NITB, Tourism Ireland and external event partners</p>	<p>May 2013</p> <p>March 2012</p> <p>April 2011 onwards</p> <p>July 2011</p> <p>July 2011</p> <p>July 2011</p>

	Objectives	Actions	Target	Lead	Support	*Timescale/Costs
		FAM visits to attend events  6. To communicate with key partners and the media through quarterly e-marketing to inform them about key events, market research and opportunities	2011			
2.4	To assist the growth and sustainability of events in Belfast by encouraging, working with and supporting event organisers in the city	1. To develop a comprehensive calendar of events to facilitate future planning  2. To review the physical infrastructure for events in Belfast by undertaking an audit of venues available and capable of hosting events  3. To work with event service providers and partners to improve the quality of services at BCC events (e.g. catering, transport, toilets)	Calendar developed  Events venue database completed  To meet with event service providers before and after events and to agree to implement feasible suggestions from event surveys  Two new	City Events Unit  City Events Unit  City Events Unit  City Events Unit	Event Stakeholder Group plus internal, external event organisers and BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, BVCB, NITB, Tourism Ireland  NITB, DSD and internal and external event organisers and venues  NITB and event service providers and partners	July 2011  April 2012  Dec 2012  Dec 2012

	Objectives	Actions	Target	Lead	Support	*Timescale/Costs
		<p>4. To identify and build relationships with local, national and international event organisations/ associations to learn about Best Practice and develop new methods and practices for event promotion, development and bidding</p> <p>5. To commission an Events Development Toolkit for use by external event organisers to develop skills in the areas of:</p> <p>a. good practice  b. marketing  c. networking  d. income and sponsorship  e. event management and programming  f. business planning</p>	<p>relationships established each year. Information disseminated as appropriate internally and externally</p> <p>Toolkit in place by January 2012</p>	City Events Unit	<p>Event Stakeholder Group plus internal, external event organisers and BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, BVCB, NITB, Tourism Ireland</p> <p>Event Stakeholder Group plus internal, external event organisers and BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, BVCB, NITB, Tourism Ireland</p>	Jan 2013
2.5	To develop the capabilities of the events sector by addressing skills gaps through training and development opportunities for staff	1. For the City Events Unit to identify event training and development opportunities	As above	City Events Unit		August 2011

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>*Timescale/Costs</b>
2.6	To review both the Support of Sport scheme and funding for larger-scaled sports/non-sports event in conjunction with the Council's Departments and other relevant external bodies	1. To create a consistent external funding stream for events that meets customer requirements and the Council's corporate objectives	Sept 2011- New online version of funding available	City Events Unit	Event Stakeholder Group plus BCC Parks and Leisure Dept and internal, external event organisers and BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, BVCB, NITB, Tourism Ireland	Sept 2011
2.7	To develop clear financial commitments to the bidding, securing and delivery of major international events	1. Ensure that the resources are available to bid, secure and deliver major international events	Identify and attempted to secure one key international event for each year of the action plan	City Events Unit & NITB	Event Stakeholder Group plus BCC Parks and Leisure Dept and internal, external event organisers and BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, BVCB, NITB, Tourism Ireland	

***Aim: To maximise the impact events have on Belfast and the economic and social benefits they bring to the city***

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>*Timescale/Costs</b>
3.1	To better understand the value of events to Belfast by improving the quality of information gathered in relation to the impact and benefits of events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To develop an assessment framework which can determine the full impact of events in Belfast</li> <li>2. To subsequently use the assessment framework to carry out impact surveys at BCC and other events</li> <li>3. To review the effectiveness of the assessment framework after one year and implement changes where needed</li> <li>4. To prepare annually a report that summarises the impact of events in Belfast and to distribute this to partners and event organisers</li> <li>5. To include event related questions in Tourism Monitor survey and the NI Visitor Attitudes surveys</li> </ol>	<p>Assessment framework developed</p> <p>Assessment framework implemented</p> <p>Assessment framework reviewed</p> <p>Annual report prepared</p> <p>Questions included in surveys</p>	<p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p>	<p>Event Stakeholder Group plus internal, external event organisers and BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, BVCB, NITB, Tourism Ireland</p>	<p>July 2011</p> <p>August 2011</p> <p>August 2012</p> <p>August 2012</p> <p>August 2011</p>
3.2	To increase the economic impact of annual events in Belfast by 5% per year	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To continue to measure economic impact through economic impact assessments</li> <li>2. To review information gathered through economic impact</li> </ol>	<p>Review completed</p>	<p>City Events Unit</p> <p>City Events Unit</p>	<p>Event Stakeholder Group plus internal, external event organisers and BCC Tourism,</p>	<p>April 2011 and onwards</p> <p>April 2011</p>

	Objectives	Actions	Target	Lead	Support	*Timescale/Costs
		assessments and incorporate additional elements where necessary			Culture and Arts, BVCB, NITB, Tourism Ireland	
3.3	To achieve a return rate of investment for the Council of £8 for every £1 spent	1. To continue to measure return on investment through economic impact assessments	To provide a £1:8 return at end of action plan	City Events Unit		March 2014
3.4	To gather information on the social impacts of Council events	1. As per Objective 3.1		City Events Unit	Internal and external event organisers	June 2011
3.5	To increase volunteering opportunities available at Council events	1. To develop a volunteering programme to provide opportunities to assist at Council and other events in the city  2. Establish a database of groups and individuals willing to volunteer at events and work volunteer groups  3. Identify events which require volunteers  4. Provide training and mentoring opportunities for volunteers via volunteer groups	Programme developed  Database established  Events identified on an annual basis Develop a volunteer training schedule	City Events Unit  City Events Unit  City Events Unit  City Events Unit	Sport NI; NICVA; NITB and Volunteer Now	June 2011  June 2011  September 2011  September 2011



	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>*Timescale/Costs</b>
3.6	To utilise key individuals to promote Belfast as a key event location	1. To establish three ambassadors to promote Belfast as national and international destinations	Create three events champions to act as ambassadors for city events	City Events Unit	Event Stakeholder Group plus internal, external event organisers and BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, BVCB, NITB, Tourism Ireland	June 2011

\* The cost of the implementation of the action plan will be consumed within the existing annual events budgets. However, this figure will vary dependant upon Council core funding and the number, size and scale of events. 2011-12 this budget is £1.4m.

**Appendix II**  
**Draft Event Assessment Framework**  
for assessing both current events and event to be bid for

<b>Events Assessment Framework</b>	
<b>Economic Opportunities:</b>	<p>Growth in visitor numbers and associated revenue.</p> <p>Possible incomes from attendees, participants.</p> <p>Repeat business, meaning the potential ability of an event to entice repeat visitation from attendees and/or competitors.</p>
<b>Legacy:</b>	<p>Events should clearly demonstrate how its staging will impact on: future development of participants and or communities and create additional resource for future use</p>
<b>Publicity Opportunities:</b>	<p>The extent of international publicity and promotion generated for Belfast through media coverage, international distribution of information about the event and about Belfast, advertising, competitions, a welcome message, and pre and post journalists visits. Exposure in Belfast's key markets, in particular ROI, Britain, Mainland Europe, the US.</p> <p>Consideration of the global appeal of the event to all sections of the media community including broadcasters, journalists, and Internet related sites.</p> <p>Editorials and advertising in relevant publications.</p>
<b>Promotional Opportunities:</b>	<p>On-site televised coverage at the event.</p> <p>Incorporation into the official event logo, and use of same.</p> <p>Media presence and press involvement at the event.</p> <p>Consumer/trade/concessions stand at the event.</p> <p>Internet opportunities.</p> <p>Corporate entertainment opportunities, on-site hospitality, complimentary tickets opportunities; meaning where an involvement with a particular event provides a "package" of sponsorship opportunities</p>
<b>Community/ Destination /Venue Capacity Building:</b>	<p>Community development should be addressed with events assessment. This should pertain to community events (geographically focused in an area in the city) and community input into regional and major events.</p> <p>Where an event in Belfast provides a platform from which other, additional, higher-profile, events in the same theme could be attracted, this would add additional value to the event in question.</p> <p>Where infrastructure investment adds to the capacity of a destination or specific venue to be able to host and accommodate future events – e.g. additional hotel or exhibition facilities substantiated or mooring facilities e.g. Tall Ships 2009</p>
<b>Organisational Capacity:</b>	<p>Where the capacity of the agency/organisation/ partnership bidding for or hosting an event is built up, to assist the attraction and management of further events in the future – this may include generation of corporate sponsorship, marketing capability, volunteering etc.</p>
<b>Participation/Community</b>	<p>It is essential that all events should have the capacity to</p>

<b>links/domestic audience attendance</b>	attract local audience. This should be complimented with participatory, where possible, from local people.
<b>Volunteering</b>	Number of volunteers utilised training and mentoring opportunities