



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast Tourism Forum
Date:	10 August 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, 3459

1	Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that the Belfast Tourism Forum was established in March 2011 to oversee the implementation of the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework. Its role is to provide regular feedback to the Development Committee; to prioritise and co-ordinate the delivery of tourism projects and to monitor and review the effectiveness of the Tourism Framework.
1.2	Membership of the Forum is comprised of key stakeholders from throughout the City representing the tourist industry. The calibre of the Belfast Tourism Forum is high (appendix 1) and gives the city a powerful lobbying voice to effectively implement the Framework through working in partnership across the City
1.3	It has met on two occasions and Members contributed to the update presentations (appendix 2) and debate. There will be key focus topics to structure each meeting with the previous one being a focus on growing the GB and ROI market.
1.4	The Council has an overarching role in co-ordinating this Forum and ensuring that it delivers the aims and objectives of the framework. At a Special Development Committee meeting on the 27 June it was agreed that the Chairman and Deputy Chairman (or their nominees) represent the Committee.
1.5	The Belfast Tourism Forum is supported by a working Officers Group with representatives from BCC, BVCB, BCCM and NITB. This group meets on a more regular basis and is the operational arm of the forum, responsible for

	ensuring that the the action plan (appendix 4) is on track and that working with the wider industry projects are managed and implemented.
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2	Key Issues
2.1	The Belfast Tourism Forum provides an opportunity to exchange information and challenge activity being undertaken by BCC, NITB, BVCB and indeed the sector. To ensure that information is shared to all stakeholders the Forum has agreed to develop a strong integrated communications plan aimed at the industry and general public. This will include a quarterly ezine of information (based on the attached presentation, appendix 3). This will be released after Development Committee is updated quarterly.
2.2	The main focus of the Tourism Forum this year will be to maximise the opportunities arising from Titanic and 2012 in general. This includes developing linkages and product to ensure that visitors are spread from Titanic across other parts of the city. One of these projects includes pedestrian signage from Titanic Quarter to the city centre to ensure that visitors are redirected to other attractions and venues. This project is currently being scoped and is subject to funding from NITB. Once confirmation that funding will be available, a more detailed report will be made to Committee for approval to proceed.
2.3	A number of actions captured within the plan are coded red due mainly to funding constraints. The Tourism Forum has requested a meeting with the Minister for Tourism to advise on progress of the Forum and also to discuss how some of the red/amber actions can be progressed. It was agreed that this request should come from Development Committee with the backing of the Forum.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> £15k already committed out of departmental budget plan to support administration, meetings, venue costs and ezine materials.
3.2	<u>Staff Resources</u> Staff allocation already included in departmental plan.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no equality or good relation considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman attend the Belfast Tourism Forum on 30 September 2011 and 15 December 2011. 2. The Development Committee write to the Minister for Tourism, Arlene Foster, to request a meeting.

	3. An integrated communications plan is developed, to include a quarterly ezine and ensure maximum exposure for the work BCC is doing to drive tourism development.
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6	Decision tracking
	Members will be updated on the Belfast Tourism Forum key deliverables and outcomes.
	Time Frame: Quarterly Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

7	Key to Abbreviations
	BVCB – Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau NITB – Northern Ireland Tourist Board BCCM – Belfast City Centre Management NITB – Northern Ireland Tourist Board

8	Appendices
	Appendix 1 Belfast Tourism Forum membership Appendix 2 Belfast Tourism Forum update presentation Appendix 3 Tourism Ireland presentation Appendix 4 Belfast Tourism Framework Action Plan Year 1