



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	International linkages – Marketing Belfast
<b>Date:</b>	14 September 2011
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<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members will be aware that the Committee has recently identified the need to focus its work around a number of key themes. These include the Belfast Economy, Marketing the City and Shaping Belfast.
1.2	As part of the work associated with Marketing the City, there are a number of upcoming opportunities to establish and develop linkages between Belfast and the United States for the promotion of tourism and economic development. These include three visits to the city by education and business groups as well as participation in an invitation-only event in New York hosted by Mayor Bloomberg, focusing on exploring opportunities to encourage innovation and create new employment opportunities in an increasingly competitive global environment.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key issues</b>
2.1	<u>Visit by New York state legislators delegation – 18 October 2011</u> A delegation comprising over 20 New York state legislators will visit Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland in mid-October 2011. The representatives will arrive in Belfast on the morning of 18 October and will attend a lunch organised by Invest NI and the Law Society of Northern Ireland. In the afternoon, they will attend a seminar on legal issues in Northern Ireland. In the evening, they will be hosted at Stormont and will return to Dublin in the early morning of 19 October.
2.2	There may be an opportunity for a number of Belfast City Council representatives to meet the delegation late morning on 18 October. If this fits with their schedule, it may be appropriate to make a presentation on the regeneration opportunities and challenges within the city and to draw attention to the growing business services sector, particularly the recent investments by international legal businesses and the opportunities that this presents for further development.

2.3	<p><u>Irish Technology Leadership Group visit – 8 October 2011</u></p> <p>The Irish Technology Leadership Group (ITLG) is a group of Irish and Irish American senior executives based in Silicon Valley who are active in the global technology industry. They work to promote industry linkages between USA and Ireland through a range of collaborative initiatives including trade visits, award ceremonies and events in both USA and Ireland. The next event will take place in Hollywood USA in mid-September. Entitled “Innovation in Entertainment”, it will bring together international media groups and business leaders from multinational businesses. The First and Deputy First Ministers will make a presentation at the event, outlining the opportunities and business potential in Belfast and Northern Ireland in this area of business.</p>
2.4	<p>ITLG leaders are proposing a visit to Belfast in early November 2011. The delegation is likely to comprise up to 10 key business contacts who will come to the city to explore opportunities for business and investment and present their technology showcase. Their visit is scheduled to coincide with the MTV Awards and to capitalise on the increased media presence in the city at that time.</p>
2.5	<p>Delegates have been in contact with Invest NI with a view to organising a visit programme and meetings schedule. This programme is currently being finalised. Once the business meetings have been agreed, there is potentially an opportunity for engagement with elected representatives from Belfast City Council and key officials to present the business opportunities within the city and to underline Belfast City Council’s commitment to encouraging additional investment and promoting collaboration between local businesses and their US counterparts.</p>
2.6	<p>Updates on this programme will be provided as they become available. However, it is proposed that a meeting be organised between ITLG representatives and selected key local contacts – including representatives from the Development Committee – to explore the opportunities for building on the ITLG link as a means of supporting the development and growth of this sector.</p>
2.7	<p><u>Visit to Belfast by delegation from Nashville – 24-26 October 2011</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that the Belfast Nashville Sister City Action Plan has been expanded to include not only culture and tourism, but education, economic development, genealogy, international exhibitions, international marketing and creative industries. In recent years Queen’s University has been developing strong global links with the US and is rapidly developing international research and business partnerships that work for the benefit of the city and its citizens. Belfast and Nashville Sister City relationship has undoubtedly assisted in building the healthy and mutually-beneficial relationship between Queen’s and Vanderbilt University, and the relationship has been endorsed by Mayor Dean’s Office in Nashville.</p>
2.8	<p>A delegation of four high-level academics from Vanderbilt University (Dr. Richard McCarty – Provost and VP for Academic Affairs, Dr. Tim MacNamara – Vice-Provost for International, Dr. Carolyn Dever – Dean, College of Arts and Sciences and Dr. Mona Frederick – Director, Robert Penn Warren Center for Humanities) will visit Belfast in October. The inward visit from Vanderbilt will signify the signing of a formal agreement between the two Sister City Universities. The Vanderbilt link offers a broad-based programme of research partnerships and possibilities for staff/student mobility and exchange on an annual basis. Building upon successful collaborations in Astrophysics, Maths and Physics, and between Schools in the Arts and Humanities at Queen’s and the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities in Vanderbilt, other research interests include a range of areas in which Queen’s leads the way, including pharmacoepidemiology, medical chemistry, Paediatric medicine, Information Systems</p>

	and Environmental Engineering. There will also be collaborations in Education (where the Peabody Institute of Education in Vanderbilt is currently ranked number 1 in North America).
2.9	Queen's University has requested civic engagement and there will be an opportunity for a number of Belfast City Council representatives to meet with the delegation. An update on the programme will be circulated as it becomes available.
2.10	<u>NYC Global Partners Summit: Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship – City Strategies; 2-4 November 2011</u> The New York City Office of the Mayor manages its international connections through its “Global Partners” programme. Through this initiative, the city works with 55 cities worldwide identified as key strategic development partners by the Mayor of New York. Belfast is one of the 55 cities that form part of the NYC Global Partners initiative.
2.11	Each year, the city of New York organises an international summit to which its partner cities are invited. The 2011 summit will take place on 2-4 November 2011. The theme is “Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship: City Strategies.”
2.12	The programme is being finalised at present. It has been developed in cooperation with the NYC Economic Development Corporation and Columbia University with the aim of bringing together cities using creative approaches to spur innovation and create new employment opportunities in response to an increasingly competitive global environment.
2.13	Key speakers at the event will include Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Jeffrey R. Immelt, CEO of General Electric and Chair of President Obama’s Council on Jobs and Competitiveness. The programme will include a series of panels and workshops on issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing cost-effective space to support business innovation in industry clusters</li> <li>- Promoting entrepreneurship by providing access to capital and lowering costs for start-up companies</li> <li>- Facilitating business creation by reducing government red tape</li> <li>- Creating public-private partnerships for workforce training and development.</li> </ul>
2.14	The invitation from Mayor Bloomberg’s office is to be issued within the coming weeks. It is proposed that the Lord Mayor and Chair of Development Committee plus two officers accept the invitation to attend the NYC Global Partners event.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<u>Financial</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New York Legislators event – costs not to exceed £500</li> <li>- ITLG event – costs not to exceed £500</li> <li>- Nashville/Vanderbilt visit – costs not to exceed £500</li> <li>- Participation in NYC Global Partners event – travel and accommodation costs not to exceed £1500 for each participant at the event. Total costs not to exceed £6000, based on four participants.</li> </ul>

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	No specific equality or good relations implications to this report.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note the proposed visits to Belfast by US Legislators group; Industry Technology Leaders group and Nashville sister city delegations as well as the invitation to attend the NYC Global Partners summit on Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship</li> <li>- Approve engagement in each of the events along with the indicative budgets for each event, as outlined above.</li> </ul>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
There is no decision tracking attached to this report.	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
ITLG – Irish Technology Leadership Group	