



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Local Tourism Destinations
<b>Date:</b>	<u>28 September 2011</u>
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Members will be aware that the Belfast Integrated Strategic Framework was launched in March 2011. One of the key themes within the framework is to develop local tourism destinations in order to extend the tourism offer outside the city centre, spread the benefits of tourism and in general lift the standard of visitor experience across the city.</p>
1.2	<p><del>The concept was inspired by the mosaic model of place shaping in cities and towns, introduced into the framework by Locum Consulting.</del></p> <p>The development of local tourism destinations will support the council and city wide tourism agencies such as Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau to keep abreast of new developments and address gaps in infrastructure, product and services as well as involving potential new members.</p>
1.3	<p>The initiative will also allow local destinations to better support existing city wide initiatives and identify new city wide themes based on product strengths across the city. At a local level, it will allow local businesses, attractions and communities to influence and be part of shaping <del>be part of shaping</del> the city's product development, <del>—</del>visitor servicing and marketing strategies and more importantly promote local clustering to target agreed segments/visitors. It will <del>provide the opportunity to share research and intelligence—share industry communications and events</del> to ensure local destinations better understand the target visitor and their needs and requirements to enhance and maximise potential return of a premier visitor experience.</p>
1.4	<p>The local destinations identified in the framework are based on their potential to add to the Belfast tourism offer. They are, in alphabetical order;</p> <p>Belfast Hills Connswater Community Greenway Cathedral Quarter</p>

1.5	<p>Gaeltacht Quarter Lagan Corridor Lisburn Road North Belfast Cultural Corridor Queen's Quarter Shankill Quarter Titanic Quarter</p>
	<p>A description of each of the local destinations is attached as Appendix 1, together with an overview of where the destination is in respect of its product life cycle.</p> <p>The framework outlines a number of key steps to developing local tourism destinations;</p>
1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage with local stakeholders</li> <li>- Audit of tourism related assets</li> <li>- Establish appropriate vehicle</li> <li>- Develop and implement local tourism plan</li> </ul>
1.7	<p>It should be noted that considerable work has been undertaken across Belfast on tourism audits and identifying local strengths, weaknesses and therefore development of the plan will not be an extensive task; the aim is to focus on delivery. However the opportunity is to ensure that local plans fit with the city's tourism framework and therefore the audits may require more specific information e.g. food tourism is one of the cities priority products and therefore local audits will identify local food offering e.g. pubs which serve food, cafes, restaurants etc.</p>
1.8	<p>Having reviewed destination development models in other cities and regions, there is an opportunity to introduce an independent assessment of each local tourism destination via a 'mystery shopper' type exercise. This will also set a baseline for future performance.</p>
1.9	

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	<p><u>Issues</u> The Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework spans a period of three years, and a bid has been made for £120,000 per annum to support the implementation of local tourism destinations (subject to the approval of annual</p>

	budget estimates).
2.2	Splitting the budget evenly across <u>9-10</u> tourism destinations each year will not create the critical mass in either budget or product to make a difference at a local level. It is therefore proposed that delivery is phased and destinations are prioritized for initial support based on their readiness to deliver visitor experiences.
2.3	Appendix 1 explains how some of the destinations are heavily reliant on other sources of external funding for capital development e.g. Lagan Corridor, Belfast Hills and Connswater Community Greenway and the North Belfast Cultural Corridor. It would therefore seem appropriate that any funding towards these areas is delivered within the timescale of their capital programmes to maximize the impact.
2.4	Titanic Quarter is the subject of considerable investment to date, including a series of tourism initiatives driven by NITB, and in some instances supported by BCC aimed at clustering the local tourism assets on site. Due to the nature of this being a brown field regeneration site with an agreed masterplan for development, Titanic Quarter does not need financial support via the local tourism destination initiative, as there is a current plan and funding is available through other sources.
2.5	The Lisburn Road is included in the council's retail support programme and the Lisburn Road Traders Association is availing of this current opportunity. The timescale of delivery is in this current financial year.
2.6	It is therefore recommended that the Local Tourism Destination programme is delivered in two phases:
2.6-17	Phase 1 will kick start with immediate effect and the focus will be on Cathedral Quarter, Gaeltacht Quarter, Shankill Quarter and Queen's Quarter. All have witnessed recent investments in new tourism developments and offer an immediate opportunity to link with Titanic Quarter in developing and packaging products for 2012.
2.86-2	Phase 2 will kick start in 6 months time, and will focus on Belfast Hills, North Belfast Cultural Corridor, Connswater Community Greenway, Lagan Corridor and Lisburn Road.
2.97	The local tourism destination toolkit will be uploaded on the council's website as a step by step guide for any local area with an interest in developing tourism to audit their product and develop a local plan.
2.108	The Economic Development Unit and Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit are also in the process of securing ERDF funding towards an industry development programme " <u>Destination Belfast</u> ", aimed at the visitor experience economy. This programme will recruit Tourism Ambassadors, support customer care training, sales growth programme and skills and one on one mentoring.
	<u>Targets include;</u>
	1. <u>Recruiting 16 tourism ambassadors.</u>
	2. <u>Deliver 5 Tourism Ambassador workshops</u>
	3. <u>Welcome Host training</u>
	4. <u>6 Customer service masterclasses</u>
	5. <u>A series of Meet the Buyer events</u>
	6. <u>Online customer service toolkit</u>

<u>2.11</u>	Destination Belfast has been specifically designed to support the Local Tourism Destinations and therefore a suite of training and skills support will be available over the next two years.
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<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<u>Financial</u> A breakdown of the budget is attached as Appendix 2. £3690,000 will be allocated to the development and delivery of the destination plans.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	No specific equality or good relations considerations.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <u>n</u>Note the proposals to support the Local Tourism Destinations prioritised.</li> <li>– <u>c</u>Committee £300,000 towards the development of delivery of the destination plans.</li> <li>–</li> </ul>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
A report on progress will be brought back to Development Committee in December 2011.	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
<u>NITB – Northern Ireland Tourist Board</u> <u>BCC – Belfast City Council/A</u>	

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
<u>Appendix 1 – Local Tourism destination profiles</u>	

Appendix 2 – Budget breakdown 2011 to 2014  
N/A



**Appendix 2**

<b>Appendix 2</b>		<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Toolkit development		Contracted – content, publication (on line)	£20,000	November – December 2011
Phase 1	Stakeholder Engagement	TCA Unit	£150,000	November 2011 to March 2013
	Audits	Contracted		
	Plan Development	Contracted		
	Product/Plan Support	Agreed vehicles		
Phase 2	Stakeholder Engagement	TCA Unit	£150,000	April 2012 to August 2014
	Audits	Contracted		
	Plan Development	Contracted		
	Product/Plan Support	Agreed vehicles		
Mystery Shopper			£30,000	
Evaluation			£10,000	
Total budget @ £120,000 over 3 years			<b>£360,000</b>	

