



## Belfast City Council

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| <b>Report to:</b>         | Development Committee                                 |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | City Dressing Plan 2012 to 2013                       |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 13 December 2011                                      |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470     |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459 |

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| <b>1</b> | <b>Relevant Background Information</b>  |
| 1.1      | The Development Committee on 11 August 2010 approved the development of the Belfast City Dressing plan which would animate the city from 2011 through to 2013. The plan was the outcome of a review undertaken by TTC International on City Dressing and was overseen by a City Dressing Steering Group which includes stakeholder representatives from Council, Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB), Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM), the Department for Regional Development (DRD) and the Department for Social Development (DSD). The final recommendations were based on best practice in competitor cities, past activity, city branding, events potential and the city's Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework – Gateway to the Future.  |
| 1.2      | The main objectives for the Belfast City Dressing Plan are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offer a warm Belfast welcome to our visitors</li> <li>- Create an atmosphere of special occasion across the city</li> <li>- Create interest about different parts of the city</li> <li>- Instil pride in our citizens and communities</li> <li>- Increase visitor footfall and spend across the city</li> <li>- Reinforce the Belfast Brand</li> <li>- Maximise opportunities presented by Titanic 2012, large scale city events, large scale conferences to the city, capital investment programme, cruise ship arrivals</li> <li>- Agree a co-ordinated approach to city-wide dressing with all key stakeholders</li> <li>- Leverage support and buy-in from stakeholders and where possible drive efficiencies</li> </ul> |
| 1.3      | For phase 1, lamp post banners were agreed at key locations (primarily in the city centre) and the Development Committee on Wednesday 13 April 2011   |

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|     | <p>endorsed the “<i>Patterns of the city</i>” designs. It was noted that, should any additional funding become available, the Committee would be consulted with a view to identifying additional locations for the erection of further banners. An additional project to dress empty units with Belfast literary quotes was also undertaken with support from NITB’s Tourism Innovation fund.</p>  |
| 1.4 | <p>Phase 1 of the City Dressing campaign was launched in July 2011 and has received largely positive media coverage and support from stakeholders across the city. There has been extensive community interest from the city centre focused campaign and a desire that the campaign is extended to other areas.</p>  |
| 1.5 | <p>To date approximately 472 banners have been manufactured and erected with designs and patterns being inspired through community workshops and open calls to the public through the City Matters magazine. Eleven to 18 year old participants from Glencairn Youth Initiative, Falls Youth Providers and the Reach Project took photographs of their own areas and the city centre to showcase to visitors and locals what captivates them about Belfast. They worked together to suggest ideas and to talk through what Belfast means to them and what people may overlook about the city. Their ideas were translated into patterns and displayed on banners across the city. For the Christmas inspired patterns a call was issued via City Matters and attracted submissions from private individuals and Beechall Day Centre.</p> |
| 1.6 | <p>The patterns have been inspired by locations and objects unique to Belfast and the banners have been interspersed with the City ‘B’ Brand with a call to action via the visitor website site <a href="http://www.gotobelfast.com">www.gotobelfast.com</a>. A dedicated section is on the website to explain the patterns and visitor information on how to visit the buildings and themes they represent. Attached are examples of Christmas banners, proposed new 2012 banners and literary Belfast vacant shop dressing, as appendix 1.</p>   |
| 1.7 | <p>The <i>Patterns of the city</i> approach has driven efficiencies. Whereby in previous years, the banners have been changed on a seasonal basis (at a cost of approximately £120,000 per annum) the Patterns of the City can now be updated and refreshed by adding to the themes during the year as opposed to incurring significant costs to produce and erect a new set of banners every 3 months. To date 472 banners have been manufactured, at a cost of £61,669 working out at £131 per banner and £4 per month over 3 year’s life span (the estimated life of the current city dressing initiative).</p>   |
| 1.8 | <p>Based on the budget allocation in previous years, £120,000 has been ring fenced for 2011/2012 and included in the budget estimates for 2012/2013 for city dressing. Members have already agreed to contribute £35,000 towards the Cow Parade in 2012 from the current 2011/2012 budget.</p>   |
| 1.9 | <p>Obviously there has been a saving with the current approach, however due to the merits of City Dressing for the city it is recommended that Members continue investing in city dressing under the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extend the <i>Patterns of the city</i> to arterial routes/local tourism destinations;</li> <li>- Reinforce branding at key Events/Festivals including Tier 1 (audience over 30,000) and 2 (under 30,000) events as part of the 2012 and London Olympics programme;</li> <li>- Explore opportunities to dress Empty Shop Units;</li> <li>- Support physical animation in shared spaces to complement larger events e.g. busking and street theatre.</li> </ul>   |

| <b>2</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>   |
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| 2.1      | City Dressing is a key output of the Belfast Integrated Strategic Framework and BCC has made significant investment and taken the lead in developing a robust city dressing plan.   |
| 2.2      | <p>It is critical that all agree to a clear and transparent criteria for City Dressing and Members are asked to support the following guidelines for 2011–2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- City dressing is integral to the City Brand and the building of that Brand</li> <li>- All new city dressing plans are based on the <i>Patterns of the city</i> concept and should carry the Belfast B</li> <li>- Where possible opportunities are provided for the citizens and communities of Belfast to participate in the development of new Patterns</li> <li>- Locations will be based on the Council's local tourism destinations and arterial routes</li> <li>- Messaging/wording must be kept to a minimum and adhere to Department of Regional Development's guidelines</li> <li>- New city dressing will comply with equality and good relations guidelines</li> </ul> |
| 2.3      | The City Dressing Steering group has a strong representation among city stakeholders, however we have identified the need to include new members and would recommend extending membership to PLACE, who have undertaken work on empty retail units and NITB who currently have a budget for city dressing in 2012.  |
| 2.4      | The roll out of city dressing to arterial routes and local tourism destinations will have to be on a phased basis (appendix 2). Officers recommend that the areas prioritised are aligned to priority areas already agreed under renewing the routes and local tourism destinations, in particular the city quarters i.e. Cathedral, Gaeltacht, Queen's, Shankill and Titanic.  |
| 2.5      | Officers have been liaising with NITB, who also have a budget for city dressing in 2012. Their proposals are attached as Appendix 3 and where possible we will be seeking NITB support to fulfil Council's City Dressing plans through co-operative projects. Where possible, due to the level of investment from NITB into Tier 1 events, the City Centre banners will seek to carry the Our time, Our Place – Belfast 2012 branding (appendix 1).   |
| 2.6      | Measuring success of the city dressing campaign will be important to show the return that investing in city branding at a localised level can bring. Officers will measure the impact through local survey's, the Belfast Tourism Monitor and via <a href="http://www.gotobelfast.com">www.gotobelfast.com</a> .  |

| <b>3</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b>  |
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| 3.1      | <p>The budget allocation for 2011/2012 is 85,000 and 2012/2013 is £120,000. It is recommended that it is split into the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extend the <i>Patterns of the city</i> to arterial routes/local tourism destinations - £90,000;</li> <li>- Reinforce branding at key Events/Festivals including Tier 1 (audience over 30,000) and 2 (under 30,000) events as part of the 2012 and London Olympics programme - £10,000</li> <li>- Explore opportunities to dress Empty Shop Units - £10,000</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support physical animation in shared spaces to complement larger events e.g. busking and street theatre - £10,000</li> <li>- Ongoing maintenance, storage and installation for 2 year period - £85,000</li> </ul> |
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| <b>4</b> | <b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>  |
| 4.1      | There are no specific equality or good relations considerations attached to this report. |

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| <b>5</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
| 5.1      | <p>Members are asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree to extend the city dressing initiative as outlined in paragraph 1.9 and</li> <li>- Agree that membership of the City Dressing Steering Group is extended to PLACE and NITB.</li> </ul> |

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| <b>6</b>  | <b>Decision Tracking</b> |
| City Dressing plan update will be brought to Committee in May 2012.       |                          |
| Timeframe: May 2012                      Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay |                          |

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| <b>7</b> | <b>Key to Abbreviations</b>           |
| DSD      | Department for Social Development     |
| BCC      | Belfast City Council                  |
| NITB     | Northern Ireland Tourist Board        |
| BCCM     | Belfast City Centre Management        |
| BVCB     | Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau |

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| <b>8</b>   | <b>Documents Attached</b> |
| Appendix 1 – Patterns of the city and Literary Belfast Empty Unit Dressing |                           |
| Appendix 2 – Proposed locations of extended city dressing plan             |                           |
| Appendix 3 – City dressing locations proposed by NITB                      |                           |