



Belfast City Council

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| Report to: | Development Committee |
| Subject: | Consultation: NIMC Review of Northern Ireland Museums Council |
| Date: | 21 st August 2012 |
| Reporting Officer: | John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470 |
| Contact Officer: | David Purchase, Policy Officer, ext 3792 |

| Relevant Background Information | |
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| 1.1 | Council has been asked to respond to the Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC) review. This review is being conducted by the Department of Culture and Art. Although this is presented as a normal periodic review, it is likely to inform discussion around the Review of Public Administration. |
| 1.2 | The Northern Ireland Museums Council is a company with charitable status that was established under Ministerial order in 1993. It is managed by a Board, composed of representatives from the regional museums, the national museums & galleries, district councils, nominees of the Minister of Culture, Arts & Leisure, a nominee of the universities, and representatives of the independent museums. The NIMC is principally funded by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, although it also receives support for its work from its membership, a wide range of trusts, foundations and other grant bodies. |
| 1.3 | The review has several questions relating to our view on the role of NIMC, its value and future governance. The full set of questions and provisional responses are attached in the appendix. |
| 1.4 | Notification of the consultation was received by the Council on the 26 th July 2012. A response is due by the 31 st August 2012. |

| Key Issues | |
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| 2.1 | The Northern Ireland Museums Council has already been identified as likely to be disbanded as part of the Review of Public Administration. The NIMC has three main roles: providing grant funding, accrediting museums and providing training. |
| 2.2 | Of the three roles, grant funding is the most likely to be transferred to Councils. The total value of current grants is fairly low at approximately £80,000 per year, which, on a pro-rata basis, could equate to approximately £12,000 for Belfast. Although the amounts are small compared to total museum budgets, they may provide some leverage to align museums with our tourism strategies. NIMC's total budget for the year ending March 2010 was only £389,730. |
| 2.3 | Accreditation and training may also have an impact on the quality of museums and affect their value as part of our wider tourism offering. There is some concern in the industry that the current accreditation system is increasingly less relevant for our local museums. |

| Resource Implications | |
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| 3.1 | There are no resource implications. |

| Equality and Good Relations Considerations | |
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| 4.1 | None. |

| Recommendations | |
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| 5.1 | Members are asked to approve the draft BCC response to the consultation and raise any additional issues, relating to the consultation document, that they would like to be included. |

| Decision Tracking | |
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| Timeline: 31 August 2012 | Reporting Officer: John McGrillen |

| Documents Attached | |
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| Appendix 1: Consultation questions and draft response. | |