



Belfast City Council

Report to: Development Committee

Subject: **Belfast Tourism Forum**

Date: 4 September 2012

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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland tourist Board (NITB) and Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB) agreed a tourism framework for the city, the Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework 2010–2014, which was launched in March 2011. The Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework (BISTF) 2010–2014 (www.belfastcity.gov.uk/tourism) identifies a range of tourism priorities and projects for the city, many of which are now being realised including the extension to the Belfast Waterfront Hall, the relocation of the Belfast Welcome Centre and the development of local tourism destinations.
1.2	One of the recommendations within the BISTF 2010–2014 was to ensure better integration between the delivery bodies for tourism across the city. The Framework identified the need for a Belfast Tourism Forum which would have representation from the main public sector agencies and statutory bodies that impact on tourism development as well as main industry bodies such as Pubs of Ulster, Northern Ireland Hotel Federation, Northern Ireland Tour Guides Association.
1.3	At an operational level, the Forum is supported by an officers group, representing Belfast City Council's Tourism and Events teams, Belfast City Centre Management, Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau and NITB. This ensures better integration and efficiency at an operational level.
1.4	The current representation on the Belfast Tourism Forum and the Terms of Reference is attached as Appendix 1.
1.5	The first meeting of the Belfast Forum was in March 2011 and launched the start of implementing the BISTF 2010–2014. A 12 month action plan was prepared to identify the key actions to be undertaken in 2011/2012 and reports were made at quarterly meetings on progress. Subsequent meetings also identified key topics for discussion, for example;

	<p>Meeting 1, March 2011; Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework</p> <p>Meeting 2, June 2011; GB Market and barriers to growth</p> <p>Meeting 3, Sept 2011; City Events and 2012 Our Time, Our Place Campaign</p> <p>Meeting 4, Dec 2011, Industry engagement and communications</p> <p>Meeting 5, March 2012, Research Trends and Visitor Satisfaction</p> <p>Meeting 6, June 2012, Review Workshop on the impact of the Tourism Forum</p>
1.6	Some of the key outputs from the Belfast Tourism Forum have included a meeting with the Minister for Tourism to discuss tourism priorities for the city, whereby both Members of Development Committee and the industry representatives presented a joint approach; the development of a new programme of industry support 'Destination Belfast' funded by BCC and Invest NI and the roll out of a programme of support for local tourism destinations.
1.7	Overall a number of additional workshops and industry sessions have been held due to the work of the Tourism Forum and in summary a minimum of 200 businesses/organisations have participated in these.

2	Key Issues
2.1	In June 2012, representatives of the Belfast Tourism Forum attended a facilitated workshop to review progress and identify the best way forward for the Forum. The report from the workshop is attached as Appendix 2.
2.2	<p>In general there is support for a Belfast Tourism Forum and recognition that Belfast City Council is best to lead on this. Whilst the previous action plan captured all the key priorities, it was perhaps too detailed and the Forum members wished to develop more strategic work streams. The main topics, areas raised during the workshop, fell under the following headings;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic Coordination – including better and more regular research - Branding & Marketing – how best to maximise on Titanic message and reinvigorate the city brand - World Host City – Belfast needs to be committed to customer care and service and should attain World Host City status - Belfast Destinations – work has commenced on developing local destinations across the city and this should continue - Products and Programmes – music, food, literature, city events are all areas which have and continue to receive investment – what are the next themes, experiences that visitors will be drawn to?
2.3	The next meeting of the Belfast Tourism Forum is planned for 25 October 2012. The Belfast Tourism Officers Group has met to discuss the findings of the workshop and each organisation has agreed that their priorities for tourism fit within these workstreams. It is therefore proposed that the officers begin populating these workstreams for presentation to the next meeting of the Belfast Tourism Forum. The next meeting will also provide a platform to update stakeholders on the World Police and Fire Games and opportunities for 2013.
2.4	To date, Belfast City Council's representation on the Belfast Tourism Forum has included the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development Committee, Director of Development, Head of Economic Initiatives, Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager and

	Tourism Development Officer. It is recommended that this remains the same, however should the Chair/Deputy Chair be unavailable, that other Members can be approached to ensure that there is political representation at these high profile meetings.
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3	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
3.1	There are no specific equality or good relations considerations attached to this report.

4	Recommendations
4.1	Members agree that the Belfast Tourism Forum continues and that work streams are developed for Strategic Coordination, Branding & Marketing World Host City, Belfast Destinations, Products and Programmes
4.2	The Chair and Deputy Chair or their nominated representatives attend the next meeting of the Belfast Tourism Forum

5	Decision Tracking
The next update on the work of the Belfast Tourism Forum will be in March 2013.	
Timeframe: March 2013	Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

6	Key to Abbreviations
BISTF - Belfast Integrated Strategic Tourism Framework NITB - Northern Ireland tourist Board BVCB - Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau	

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference and Membership of Belfast Tourism Forum Appendix 2 – Notes from Workshop	