



**Report to:** Development Committee  
**Subject:** Sister City Nashville  
**Date:** 15 January 2013  
**Reporting Officer:** John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470  
**Contact Officers:** Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members will be aware that A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Mayor of Nashville and the Lord Mayor of Belfast in 1994 to promote cultural, tourism and business development opportunities between the two cities.
1.2	Belfast City Council's objectives in relation to Sister City Nashville are being aligned to the new Investment Strategy and Development Departmental Plan, and will be positioned within the context of the International Relations Strategy. However partners, in particular Queen's University, have continued to strengthen ties with Sister City Nashville.
1.3	At a meeting of the Development Committee on 21 February 2012, approval was given to accept the invitation from Queen's University Belfast to visit Nashville and attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair, or their nominees, and one member of staff was agreed.
1.4	In order to maximise the benefits of being in the USA at SXSW and to reduce costs associated with a separate visit to Nashville, it was further agreed at a meeting of the Development Committee on 4 December 2012, that the two itineraries be combined where possible.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The Queen's University institutional visit to USA will take place from 12 March to 14 March 2013. The aims of this visit are driven by the following strategic priorities:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To enhance internationally recognised, globally competitive and sustainable research areas</li> <li>- To develop global citizens and address international challenges</li> </ul>
2.2	<p>And the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To establish fresh student recruitment links</li> <li>- To follow up on the 12 Action Points from Vanderbilt University visit to Queen's in September 2012, which solidifies the strategic partnership between the two Universities</li> <li>- To maximise the value of Queen's activities in the USA to create a strong profile and brand for Queen's and Northern Ireland to potential US students and researchers</li> <li>- To continue to raise Queen's profile in the USA through nurturing our relationship with the British Council and Consulates</li> </ul>
2.3	<p>Professor Shane O'Neill, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences will lead the mission and support the achievement of these objectives. In attendance will be Professor John Thompson, Head of Creative Humanities Department and Mr Michael Gibbs, International Ambassador from the Vice Chancellor's Office.</p>
2.4	<p>Queen's have also confirmed a plan to host a festival of creativity of the Creative Arts and Collaborative Humanities in relation to linkages between the two universities. This will include cultural tourism products developed in partnership with Belfast City Council, including the new Belfast Soundwalks project linked to Literary Belfast, Dept of English, Sonic Arts Research Centre, through the Institute of Collaborative Humanities. To this end, they will be accompanied by writers in the Seamus Heaney Centre and other colleagues working in the Creative Arts at Queen's.</p>
2.5	<p><u>Itinerary</u> Belfast City Council has not yet received the full itinerary from Queen's, but it will include the following events:</p>
2.6	<p><u>Ian Brick Alumni Dinner</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To reaffirm the commitment to the relationship between Queen's and the USA</li> <li>- To engage and involve alumni in the advancement of internationalisation</li> </ul>
2.7	<p>Vanderbilt University Meetings with Queen's and Belfast City Council in order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To maximise the profile and awareness of the launch of the SARC project, "Belfast Soundscapes", to strengthen relationships with a key strategic partner and to increase the number of students who attend Queen's in future years. To network and raise awareness of on-going work with Vanderbilt and to support Belfast City Council in development of their international agenda.</li> <li>- To develop the collaboration with Belfast City Council and to garner support at governmental level in Nashville for projects.</li> <li>- To increase publicity for on-going projects in country.</li> </ul>

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	Approval was given by Committee on 21 February 2012 and been accounted for in the 2012/13 Tourism, Culture and Arts Budget.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report.

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