



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Digital DNA summit – request for sponsorship
Date:	20 August 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives & International Development, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The MBA Association of Ireland, in partnership with organisations such as the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce, Invest NI and the University of Ulster, is hosting a major Digital Summit – “Digital DNA” – in Titanic Belfast on Friday, 13 September, 2013.
1.2	This event will explore digital media technology and disseminate best practice on how to promote business growth both within and outside Northern Ireland.
1.3	The key sponsor for the event is NYSE Euronext. The event will attract a range of important speakers including representatives from Facebook, Google and NYSE. Those in attendance will include locally-based businesses, international companies located in the city, business support organisations and key sectoral bodies in the software, IT and digital media fields.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The Digital DNA event is expected to attract up to 300 local small businesses, predominantly those working in the IT, software and digital sectors. As such, it represents a significant opportunity for the council to promote its Super Connected City initiative and, in particular, the connection vouchers scheme.
2.2	As identified in other reports presented to committee this month, a market testing phase of the connection vouchers scheme is being rolled out in a number of locations in August and September 2013. Subject to approval by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), these connection vouchers will then be made available to all businesses across the city from November 2013.
2.3	The connection targets set out in the council’s funding application to DCMS are extremely challenging and, as such, there is a need to promote and communicate the opportunity to interested businesses. While not all businesses

	can get vouchers at the minute, any business can register their interest in participating in the scheme (registrations online at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/superconnected) and, once the market testing phase completes, those companies that are registered for the scheme will be contacted directly and their applications will be progressed (subject to DCMS approval).
2.4	In addition to the vouchers scheme, the Superconnected Cities project includes a range of activities including a metro wireless scheme to promote access to wi-fi services and a scheme to promote access to wi-fi in public buildings. These other schemes are at development stage at present and this event could provide a platform to announce the progress of these schemes and to encourage industry buy-in to the plans. The council is also looking at the development of a wider digital strategy for the city which will take account of not only economic growth but also how digital technologies can support social cohesion, through skills development and through improvements in healthcare etc. Participation in this event will ensure that the council is connected to all key organisations working in this field and that our plans are communicated to all potential partners.
2.5	As part of the sponsorship package, the council will also be able to avail of a number of free places at the event and will benefit from the positive media and communications activity both in the run-up to and during the event.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The sponsorship package for this event is £2,500.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	No specific equality and good relations considerations at this stage.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the contents of this report - Agree to sponsor the Digital DNA event at a cost of £2,500.

6	Decision Tracking
An update on progress will be brought back to Committee in January 2014.	

7	Key to abbreviations
DCMS – Department for Culture, Media and Sport	