



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Hefei City Government Visit to Belfast
Date:	22 October 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Belfast is the Chinese city of Hefei's sister city in the UK. Members will be aware that a delegation from Belfast City Council is attending a Sister City seminar hosted by Hefei in October 2013.

2	Key Issues
2.1	An arts organisation called Irish Wave is organising a collaborative art exhibition called 'Crossroads' to take place in Hefei, Belfast, Cork and Dublin in June 2014.
2.2	In order to prepare for the exhibition, a delegation of five officials and one interpreter from Hefei CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which is similar to local city government) is planning to visit Belfast in December 2013 or January 2014 for four days. The purpose of the visit is to discuss the art exhibition, exchange ideas and experiences, and explore more opportunities for future collaboration.
2.3	The five officials visiting Belfast will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the Vice Chairperson of CPPCC Hefei Committee;- the Deputy Secretary General of CPPCC Hefei Committee and Director of the Committee of Education, Science, Culture, Health and Sports;- the Deputy Head of Luyang District Government, Hefei;- the Vice President of Hefei Radio & Television Station;- the Director of the General Office of Hefei Hi-Tech Development Zone.
2.4	Belfast City Council's contact in Hefei has requested us to supply an official letter of invitation to them in order to aid their visa application process.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	It is recommended that Belfast City Council provide some hospitality for the group, not to exceed £500.
3.2	Hefei City Government state that all additional expenses in Belfast, including hotel, meals, local transportation and a tour of the city will be borne by Hefei city government.
3.3	To date, no application for assistance has been made by Irish Wave to Belfast City Council for the exhibition in June 2014.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no equality or good relations considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that Members approve a letter of invitation to be sent to Hefei CPPCC.

6	Decision Tracking
Timeline: October & November 2013 Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay	