



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Inward visit by Mayor of New Brunswick, NJ
Date:	19 November 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	Laura Leonard, European Unit Manager, ext 3577

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	As part of the Council's Investment Programme, we are committed to promoting job creation through inward investment and export promotion. To this end, Council has recently approved the Belfast International Marketing and Relations Framework which commits the city to supporting activity to deliver economic impact under the 3 markets segments of trade and investment, business and leisure tourism, and education and talent. Over 20 stakeholders across Belfast have agreed to collaborate on target markets where appropriate and to coordinate activity for the wider benefit of the city overall. An annual calendar of proposed inward and outward visits has been compiled and will be updated regularly so that Council can track and support visiting delegations and deliver cross sectoral outward missions as appropriate as part of the city wide approach.
1.2	As part of the International Framework, North America has been identified as a destination market which can deliver extensive economic benefits for Belfast across each market segment. Previously Council and the City enjoyed a range of constructive civic and business relationships with political, educational, business and commercial institutions in USA. Formal Memoranda existed from the late 1990s to mid 2000s with New York, Boston, Portland in Maine and Halifax, Nova Scotia. Other less formalized but still structured relationships existed with keynote business leaders, politicians and educational representatives in other cities mainly on the East Coast and predominantly under the Friends of Belfast network.
1.3	Members will be aware that the Lord Mayor visited New Brunswick, New Jersey, at the invitation of Mayor James Cahill, during his recently completed visit to the USA and Canada.
1.4	The purpose of the meeting with Mayor Cahill, Belfast/NI diaspora and guests of the Mayor, was to engage in an exploratory discussion regarding the development of economic and cultural links between Belfast and New Brunswick.

1.5	During the meeting, the Lord Mayor met with leading representatives from the business, music, culture, theatre, hospitality and university sectors. The outcome of the meeting was a proposal from the business sector through Belfast Ambassador Francis Schott, to bring a delegation to Belfast on 15-17 January 2014.
1.6	Francis Schott has existing links with Belfast through the hospitality industry and indeed was instrumental in the creation of the Belfast Restaurant Week.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Mayor Cahill of New Brunswick has indicated an interest in accompanying the business and cultural visit to Belfast in January 2014, pending an official invitation from the City of Belfast.
2.2	Mayor Cahill is keen to explore the merits of entering into a more formal link with Belfast, committing to trade missions and exchanges between the hospitality and cultural sectors, for the mutual benefit of both cities, particularly given the direct air connections between New Jersey and Belfast.
2.3	Members are asked to approve that Belfast City Council hosts an inward exploratory business and cultural mission from New Brunswick from 15-17 January 2014 and that an invitation is issued to Mayor Cahill of New Brunswick to lead the mission.
2.4	The maximum cost of hosting a delegation of 10 companies/organisations along with the Mayor is not estimated to exceed £5000.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The estimated maximum cost of hosting the New Brunswick mission is £5000 from within the International Relations budget.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no equality or good relations implications with respect to this.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to approve that Council hosts an inward cultural and business mission from New Brunswick led by Mayor James Cahill from 15-17 January 2014.

6	Decision Tracking
Timeline:	31 January 2014
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen