



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	International links – Mayor of Halifax, Nova Scotia
Date:	18 March 2014
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Laura Leonard, EU Manager, ext 3577

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>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.</p>
1.2	<p>As part of the International Framework, North America and Canada have 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 Canada through the Atlantic Rim Agreement. This was a formal cooperation vehicle between the cities of Belfast, Portland Maine and Halifax. However, due to a change in focus with regard to BCC's priorities this partnership weakened over the years. Other less formalised 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.</p>
1.3	<p>With the new International Framework, Council has committed to re-establishing productive international links and most recently, Council commenced the building of links again with the USA and Canada as part of visits by the Lord Mayor to the USA and Canada for the launch of the Northern Irish Connections network programme. Outcomes of this programme included the recent New Brunswick cultural and trade inward mission to Belfast as well as the Opportunity Belfast Business Mission held in February this year.</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	As part of a programme of developing relations in North America and Canada, a visit will be made to Belfast by Mayor John Savage of Halifax, Nova Scotia from 3-5 April 2014. Mayor Savage is a native of Belfast and is visiting the city to engage in a number of political and business meetings to foster cooperation with the city of Halifax.
2.2	Given the previous existence of the Atlantic Rim Agreement and the former relationship with Halifax, it is proposed that the Council marks the visit of Mayor Savage by way of hosting a small reception in the City on 4 April 2014. The City Hall is not available at this time so the Belfast Castle is a possible venue.
2.3	It is anticipated that this reception would include guests from the business and community sectors and is estimated to cost no more than £5,000.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	It is anticipated that the cost hosting a welcome reception will not exceed £5,000 from the International Relations budget.

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

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that Members agree to host a welcome reception on 4 April 2014, for Mayor Savage from the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia at a maximum cost of £5,000.

6	Decision Tracking
Timeline:	March 2014
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