



Belfast City Council

Interim Draft Events Action Plan

2014 - 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

Events have an important role to play in Belfast. They provide entertainment for residents, attract visitors and help to cement the city's position as a top cultural and tourism destination. Events also play a role in the economic development of the city and help boost the city's economy through employment, investment and visitor spend. They also deliver many social and cultural benefits for residents and can deliver a legacy that extends well beyond the event.

There are thousands of events in Belfast every year, ranging from local community events and celebrations, to large festivals and international cultural and sporting events. A number of high profile events have been held in the city, most recently the World Fire and Police Games, the Tall Ships Festival and the MTV Europe Music Awards. In 2012 Belfast also hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Torch Relays and a marked RMS Titanic's centenary. Added to this there are a range of events at venues such as the Waterfront Hall, Ulster Hall, Odyssey Arena and Custom House Square along with large music festivals such as Tennent's Vital and Belsonic. The city also hosts over 70 festivals throughout the year including cultural festivals (such as St Patrick's Day, 12th July/Oranefest and Belfast Mela) arts festivals (such as the Belfast Festival at Queens) and food festivals (Belfast Restaurant Week) to name but a few. We also have a variety of events in our parks and gardens and sporting events such as the Belfast Marathon and Giro d'Italia in 2014.

Events in Belfast attract audiences not just from the city but from across Northern Ireland and internationally. Approximately 268,000 people live in Belfast city while 645,536 live in the wider metropolitan area. Visitors to Belfast are also likely to attend events. There were 7.59 million visitor trips to Belfast in 2012 with a direct tourism spend of £416 million¹. The large population and substantial visitor numbers provide a healthy potential audience base for events in Belfast. However **visitors are increasingly looking for fresh, exciting and authentic experiences from events.** We need to motivate them to come to Belfast by developing unique events that are distinctive to Belfast.

Events in Belfast involve a wide range of organisations. These include Belfast City Council, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Visit Belfast, Tourism Ireland, event promoters and organisers, local communities, retailers and businesses, transport providers, police and emergency services and the wider events industry. These organisations make significant investments in events each year, with the Council alone spending £7.8 million on city events between 2012 and 2015. Belfast also has a growing profile as an event location and was recently described as one of the top 10 cities to hold a conference or a major event. It has also been described as one of the world's top destinations for 2012 and one of the top 10 cities "on the rise"².

We need to capitalise on Belfast's growing reputation as a leading venue for world-class events and recognise the benefits that investment in events can bring to the city. However we also must acknowledge that the growing number and size of events means **there is a need to consider the future direction of events in Belfast and for a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to attracting, supporting, delivering and marketing events.** Belfast is also in a competitive market, particularly in attracting major events to the city. Many cities and countries have developed event strategies and established separate organisations which are responsible for actively targeting and attracting events. In order to compete, Belfast

¹Source: Belfast Tourism Monitor 2012

² Sources: National Geographic Traveller Magazine, Lonely Planet, The Financial Times

too must **dedicate resources to building the profile and capacity of the city as an events location.**

Recognising the current situation, and the potential for events in Belfast, the Council, as one of the key organisations involved in events, has commissioned this (draft) action plan, in conjunction with key stakeholders. It is not possible, or appropriate, to encompass all events in a document like this. **This action plan therefore focuses on large scale events.** These are events that provide high quality and often unique cultural and sporting experiences for attendees, while at the same time showcasing the best of Belfast and enhancing its profile and reputation. They attract significant numbers of residents and also visitors from the rest of Northern Ireland and internationally. They also attract substantial media coverage both at home and abroad. Typically they are events that Belfast City Council and others have a role in attracting, supporting or delivering.

In this document, the definition of Large scale events broadly aligns with NITB's definition of 'major', 'signature experience', 'international' and 'national' events³ and typically they include those that have the potential to:

- Provide a high quality and unique experience for attendees;
- Attract at least 4,000 visitors per day;
- Attract at least 45% of their attendees from the rest of Northern Ireland and 15% internationally; and
- Deliver a return on investment of 3:1 or greater.

There are a broad range of events that meet these criteria or have the potential to do so. They range from very large major events such as the Tall Ships Festival (which attracted 750,000 people in 2009) to smaller events such as the Autumn Fair. They include international events that come to Belfast and home-grown events that are synonymous with the city. Events such as:

Belfast Festival & Queens; Festival of Fools; Twelfth of July; Belsonic; Vital; Rose Week; Christmas Lights; Autumn Fair; Cinemagic; Belfast Titanic Maritime; Tall Ships; Belfast Pride; Belfast Music Week; MTV EMAs; Belfast Marathon; Cathedral Quarter Festival; WPGF; Belfast Film Festival; Feile an Phobail; Belfast Mela; St Patrick's Day; Halloween, etc.

This action plan serves both to examine what the Council will do to support and grow events in Belfast and actions that can be undertaken collectively by the Council with key partners and the events industry. In developing this action plan, it is envisaged that it will:

- Provide focus and direction for events;
- Facilitate a more cohesive and co-ordinated approach to events in the city;
- Enhance the portfolio of Belfast events by attracting events to the city, developing new events and re-invigorating existing events; in particular, it will help to identify potential signature events for the city
- Maximise Belfast's profile and reputation as an events location and improve its competitiveness and ability to attract major events to the city;
- Contribute to Belfast's economy by generating significant economic impact through events; and
- Contribute further to Belfast's tourism and cultural offering and providing a range of events to encourage visitors to come to Belfast at all times of the year.

The action plan will also assist the Council to:

³ Northern Ireland Home of Great Events: Northern Ireland Events (draft) Plan 2014 – 2020

- Improve the quality of Council led events in the city for residents and visitors;
- Improve the marketing and promotion events;
- Develop and strengthen relationships with our partners; and
- Assist other event organisers in the city through a potential reallocation of resources, advice and skills development opportunities.

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

There are a range of key organisations that work to develop, deliver and promote large-scale events in Belfast. These include Belfast City Council, tourism bodies (Northern Ireland Tourism Board (NITB), Tourism Ireland and Visit Belfast), government departments, the events industry (and "In Any Event"), retailers and businesses, transport providers, police and emergency services and a range of cultural organisations within the city and beyond. There are also a significant number of voluntary groups that operate locally, nationally and internationally to support events in Belfast, particularly through volunteering. Within the Council, the main areas involved in large-scale events are the City Events Unit, the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit, Sports Development, Parks, and Venues. They are also supported by areas such as licensing and cleansing services. These units also work closely with elected representatives (Councillors).

To help to inform and set the context for this action plan it is important to consider the priorities and strategies that the key organisations have regarding events, particularly those relating to tourism, investment, culture and arts and communities. The role of events as positive economic and social drivers and the benefits they bring is also considered.

2.1 TOURISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

There are three key organisations involved in tourism at the NI level:

- The Department for Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI), which is responsible for formulating tourism policy in Northern Ireland;
- NITB, which is a non-departmental public body of DETI. NITB is responsible for the development of tourism and its promotion in NI and RoI. Their Tourism Event Funding Programme supports both national and international events to deliver increased visitor numbers and spend and to showcase NI as a place to visit; and
- Tourism Ireland, which works with NITB and Failte Ireland, to grow overseas tourism revenue and visitor numbers to the island of Ireland and to help NI realise its tourism potential.

In the past few years several strategies aimed at growing tourism in Northern Ireland have been developed by these organisations. These reference the importance of events to tourism.

DETI's draft *Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020* highlights the potential to grow tourism's contribution to the local economy to £1 billion by 2020, which is double the current contribution. Additional targets include increasing visitor numbers to 4.5 million and creating an additional 10,000 jobs within the tourism sector by 2020. The **role of events is recognised in the strategy** and priorities include:

- Developing a year round events programme;
- City breaks – especially event led short breaks; and
- To use events to grow out of season business and bring new visitors to NI.

In 2009 NITB developed the *Northern Ireland Tourism Brand* to create a vision for NI tourism. It has four elements:

- **Big Idea:** We are confidently moving on;
- **Vision:** To create the new Northern Ireland experience and get it on everyone's wish list;
- **Values:** We are self-believing, self-aware, forward thinking and authentic; and
- **Themes:** Experience our awakening and uncover our stories.

Northern Ireland Tourism Priorities for Growth (October 2012) sets out how the actions in the draft Tourism Strategy will be delivered. The document notes that NI's opportunity to compete within the global tourism marketplace remains largely untapped however the key markets for Northern Ireland that will drive growth in the short to medium term remain those on our doorstep, i.e. the GB market, ROI and domestic NI markets. The success of '*ni2012, our time, our place*' is highlighted, particularly the major 'tier one' events such as the Irish Open, BBC Proms in the Park and Titanic Lightshow. These events portrayed a positive image of Belfast nationally and internationally and demonstrated that NI can successfully host big events from MTV to the Irish Open and do them very well. The document goes on to outline the '**best prospect' segments** within the GB, ROI and domestic NI markets, i.e. those sets of visitors that are most likely to travel to NI in the short term. The segments are: Time Together, Mature Cosmopolitans, Family Fun, Young and Lively, Social Energisers, Culturally Curious and Great Escapers. '**Young and Lively' (RoI market) focuses on the city experience, contemporary culture and music, festivals and events** and is an important segment with scope for considerable growth⁴. There is also a focus on unique experiential tourism and five key '**Experience Pillars**' are outlined for the leisure break market in NI: Living Legends, Coasts & Lakes, Unique Outdoors, Culture & Creative Vibe and Naturally NI.

GB Path to Growth was produced in 2012 by the Tourism Recovery Taskforce⁵ in response to a drastic fall in the number of visits from GB in the past five years. The strategy aims to target specific segments of the GB market by developing and packaging "experiences" in order to restore growth from the island of Ireland's greatest source market. Extensive GB consumer research has identified four different experience types that are highly motivating for GB consumers and which can be presented to potential holidaymakers. One of these is '**Vibe of the City' – fresh, exciting and stimulating experiences and attractions in a lively atmosphere.**

To address the challenges in the GB market and motivate prospective visitors a new segmentation approach has been developed. The priority segments are Social Energisers, Culturally Curious and Great Escapers. Within each of those propositions, distinctive visitor experiences tailored to the interests and needs of the segments need to be developed.

Social Energisers - The challenge is to make Dublin and Belfast different from other European cities, with a programme of 'Vibe of the City' experiences that will deliver excitement and adventure during the day, and fun and lively entertainment at night. **Festivals and events are a key interest for social energisers** and the strategy outlines the need to:

- Increase city centre visibility for existing festivals and major concerts;
- Develop a strategy to deliver more contemporary, quirky street festivals;
- Consider developing a major city centre outdoor event and animation space;
- Present a calendar of events and 'what's on' in relevant media channels; and
- Continue to attract major international events that will help change perceptions of Belfast and NI.

In NI the product and experience development strategy will work at three levels. Firstly, working in partnership with the industry to create and develop a few distinctive and best-in-class 'hero' experiences. Secondly, developing supporting experiences that give breadth and depth to these signature experiences. Thirdly, NI needs to develop its reputation for consistently excellent customer service.

Northern Ireland Home of Great Events: Northern Ireland Events Plan 2014 – 2020 aims to give clear strategic direction for the future of the events industry in Northern Ireland with the overall vision of recognising '**Northern Ireland as the home of great events**'. Building on the contents of *Priorities for Growth* it notes that "*the development of relevant visitor segments and*

⁴ The GB market segments (Social Energisers, Culturally Curious and Great Escapers) are discussed below in *GB Pathway to Growth*

⁵ Fáilte Ireland, the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation, NITB, Tourism Ireland and other industry representatives

creation of experience pillars will allow the Events Industry to create bespoke events or amend existing events to deliver an enhanced visitor experience. These events will then act as clear motivators for visitors to come to Northern Ireland and attend these events". The document goes on to outline a range of key issues and makes recommendations in relation to these, namely:

1. Bidding for Major Events – A New Events Structure and Major Events Bidding Group (to include BCC)
2. Development of Signature/Hallmark Experience Events
3. Northern Ireland Tourism Event Funding Programme – International and National
4. Vision for Future of Events in Northern Ireland
5. Development of Events Strategic Group (to include BCC)
6. Themed/Champion Years

The new events structure will enable events to be categorised, ensuring geographical coverage, calendar spread, encouraging partnership across industry and stakeholders to deliver the overall vision for events in Northern Ireland.

2.2 BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Belfast's Tourism: Gateway to the Future is the Integrated Strategic Framework for Belfast Tourism 2010 – 2014. The vision is that "Belfast, working in partnership, will deliver the authentic European city experience by developing and co-ordinating our culture, natural and commercial assets to attract a greater number of visitors to the city and maximise the economic benefits for Belfast and Northern Ireland". Destinations across the city and future developments are highlighted and the importance of promoting these in an innovative, exciting and consistent manner, while developing new



products and destinations is recognised. In developing the Belfast experiences the framework recognises that **investment into the events programme is essential and that there is a need to develop events linked to Belfast's distinctiveness**. It notes that major events provide a catalyst to drive visitor growth and to provide platforms for the wider sector to engage and benefit. In marketing Belfast one of the objectives is to **associate Belfast with top class events on a year-round basis**.

The Council's **Investment Programme for 2012 to 2015** recognises the need to capitalise on Belfast's growing reputation as a top cultural and tourism destination and a leading venue for world-class events. It is acknowledged that in the past few years Belfast has held a number of game changing events which have helped transform people's view of the city and demonstrated it as a place which can hold its own on the world stage. A commitment is made to **invest £7.8 million in city events and to hold more international events which will continue to place Belfast on the world stage**.

The *Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012 – 15* sets out the vision that by 2020 everyone in Belfast experiences and is inspired by our city's vibrant and distinctive culture and arts. Four over-arching themes are set out: Distinctly Belfast; Inspiring Communities; Attracting Audiences; and Strengthening the Sector. Priorities include positioning culture and arts at the heart of the city, increasing the number of visitors/residents taking part in culture and arts, and promoting Belfast as a diverse and dynamic cultural city to existing and potential local and out-of-state audiences.

Belfast City Council supports over 100 arts, heritage and festival organisations operating in Belfast with grants worth almost £1.7m annually. These organisations include key arts venues such as the MAC, Lyric Theatre, Crescent Arts Centre, An Cultúrlann, and Grand Opera House as well as major festivals like Belfast Festival at Queens, Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival, and Féile an Phobail and many others. Many thousands of individual events per year are created for residents and visitors to enjoy, and the council's culture and arts funding helps these events to reach an audience of approximately four million every year. Festivals are very much part of Belfast's cultural scene and the city has at least one festival happening for every week of the year. The larger festivals attract visitors from all over the world, while the many community festivals celebrate and boost local communities, encouraging shared enjoyment across the city.

In addition to funding, Belfast City Council also offers other developmental support to the cultural infrastructure, such as the Belfast Festivals Forum which has over 80 members representing all scales of festivals operating in the city. The Forum maintains a number of marketing and skills initiatives as well as a useful Festivals Calendar.

2.3 EVENTS INDUSTRY

"*In Any Event*" is the NI Events Industry Trade Association. Established in 2012 it represents all those working within the events industry from event organisers, suppliers, destination /venue providers, government and local authority, funding associations and others who play a role in the development of events. It will also provide one umbrella body that brings together the key players, the key minds and the key thinkers together in relation to the development of events and festivals in NI.

NITB is financially supporting the development of In Any Event in its first three years, after which it should be self-sustaining. The objectives of In Any Event are to:

1. Encourage best practice in the events industry;
2. Provide educational and training opportunities;
3. Introduce standardisation around event health and safety, evaluation, methodology and economic impact; and
4. Lead research and insights into the events industry and challenge perceptions from sound evidence.

2.4 VOLUNTEERING

Northern Ireland's first ever Volunteering Strategy and Action Plan (*Join In, Get Involved: Build a Better Future*) was launched in 2012. The strategy, which is accompanied by an Action Plan, aims to create the conditions under which volunteering activity within Northern Ireland can develop and flourish. It has the following objectives:

- Recognising the value and promoting the benefits of volunteering;
- Enhancing accessibility and diversity;
- Improving the volunteering experience;
- Supporting and strengthening the volunteering infrastructure; and
- Delivering the strategy.

One of the priorities under the objectives is to recruit more volunteers and actions to support this include "realising the volunteering potential of regional, sub regional cultural and sporting

events involving and recognising volunteering...developing and implementing volunteering strategies to maximise the involvement of volunteers". In relation to extending volunteering in the public sector, local councils are also encouraged to promote and disseminate volunteering opportunities.

Volunteer Now is the regional organisation which works to promote, enhance and support volunteering across Northern Ireland. They provide training, information, guidance and support to volunteer-involving organisations and work to connect individuals and organisations to build healthy communities and create positive change. Volunteer Now were appointed to manage the recruitment and training of volunteers for the World Police and Fire Games in 2013.

2.5 BENEFITS OF EVENTS

The role of events as positive economic and social drivers is increasingly recognised⁶ and research from a range of academics⁷ has also shown that events can bring a wide range of additional benefits to the city or location where they are held. These benefits relate to:

- **Image and Profile**– events can help to promote a city, increase its profile and add to its appeal as a location to live, work, visit and study;
- **Economy** – events play an important role in contributing to a healthy local economy. They can help to deliver a competitive advantage and contribute significantly to direct and indirect economic impacts;
- **Tourism** – events can help to build a reputation as a tourist destination and increase visitor numbers. Events can also be the motivation for a visit⁸; tourists are now looking for more authentic and hands-on experiences and events underpin this by animating a destination and acting as a hook that complements existing tourism infrastructure and products;
- **Social Impacts** - An important reason for encouraging events is that they can provide entertainment and memorable experiences for large numbers of people. They are an important part of the vibrancy and character of a city. Events can also have indirect social benefits through social cohesion, community participation, and a 'feel good' factor as positive images of a city are portrayed; and
- **Legacy** – the legacy that events provide extends beyond the immediacy of the event. Events can and do impact on community and personal development, for example through volunteering opportunities. They also create resources to be used after an event and can also create positive perceptions long after an event is finished. For example, a physical legacy of the Tall Ships in 2009, was a £1 million pontoon system. This is now used by both leisure craft, the local sail training organisation and can be utilised for future major maritime events.

Over the past few years **events in Belfast have benefited the city in a number of ways:**

- 1 The Council's annual programme of events brought an estimated economic impact to the city of £22 million in 2012/13
- 2 Events have provided a range of entertainment and memorable experiences for residents and some of the millions of people that visit the city each year;
- 3 90% of people surveyed agree that events encourage people to come to Belfast
- 4 98% of people told us that there should be more events similar to those programmed in the city;

⁶ 'North East England, Festivals and Events Strategy', One North East

⁷ 'Festival and Special Event Management' Allen, J. et al. 2008

⁸ The Strategy for Tourism in England's Northwest 2003 – 2010, Northwest Regional Development Agency

- 5 Through volunteering opportunities, events like the Belfast Marathon; the Special Olympics Ireland Games; 2009 Tall Ships and 2013 World Police and Fire Games have attracted over 3,500 volunteers;
- 6 Approximately 35 community festivals per year benefit from the Community Festivals Fund which is jointly funded with the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and administered by the Council; the fund is worth £150,000 this year (2013/14);
- 7 Annually sports clubs and organisations have been able to host local, national and international events through the Council's Support for Sport fund; and
- 8 93% of city centre retailers have indicated that the City events are positive for Belfast, while 91% retailers indicated that events were well managed and delivered⁹.

2.6 IMPACT OF THE REFORM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

On 1 April 2015, as part of the reform of local government in Northern Ireland (previously known as the Review of Public Administration), the Belfast City Council area will grow to take in around 56,000 additional residents and 22,000 households as the number of councils is reduced from 26 to 11. The new council will, once in place, include parts of the existing Lisburn and Castlereagh councils, plus a small area of North Down.

The new councils will have additional responsibilities including local tourism and community planning. While Belfast City Council will continue to deliver its programme of events, some of the other enlarged council areas may become better placed to attract or compete with Belfast to host major international events.

Additionally the Council will acquire responsibility for Community planning. This is a new council-led duty aimed at improving quality of life for people, communities and neighbourhoods. It will provide a framework for councils, central government departments, statutory bodies, the third and business sectors, and other relevant agencies to work together and engage with communities to develop a shared vision for promoting wellbeing. It will place further emphasis on involving the community in developing delivering and promoting events.

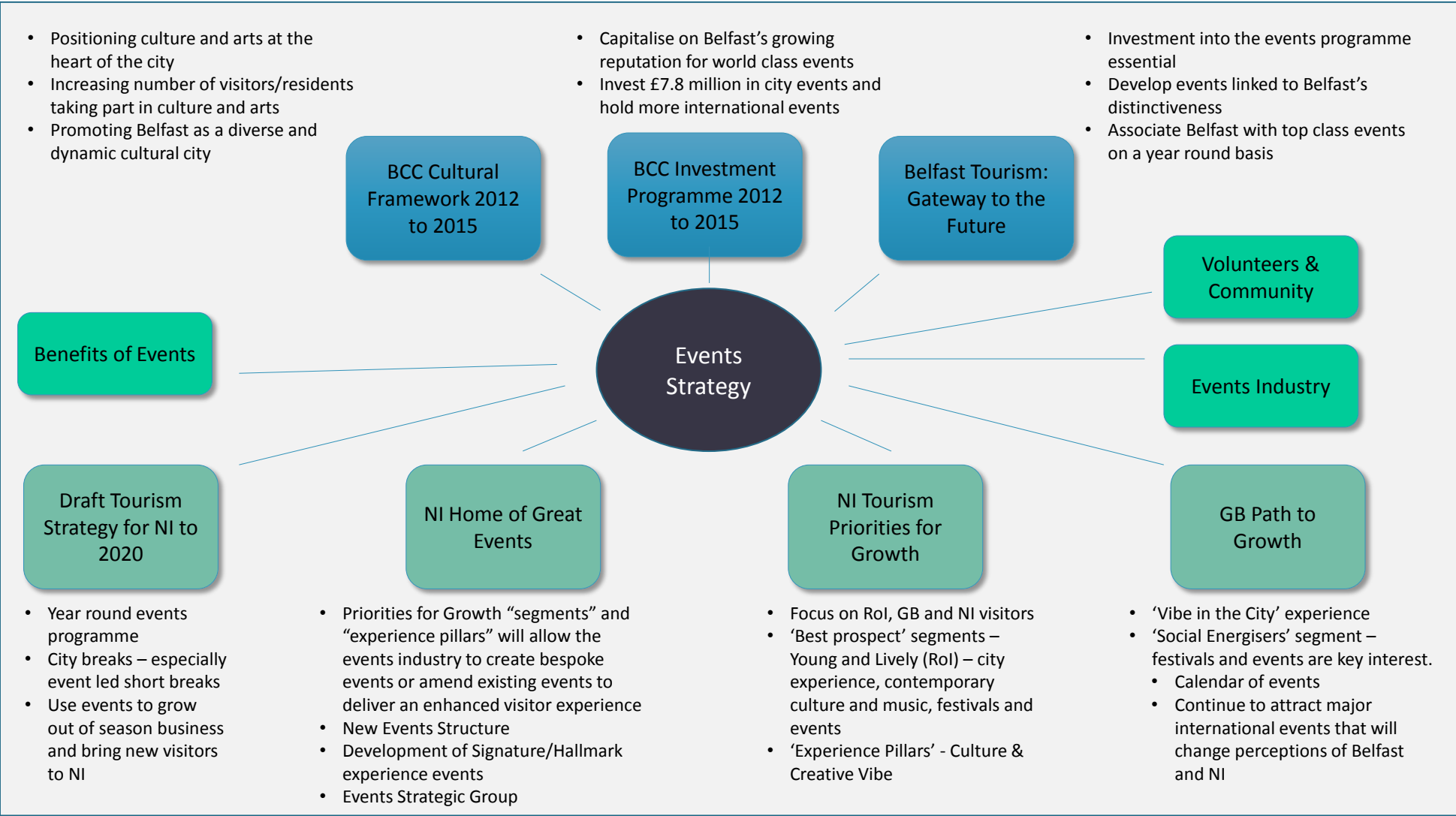
2.7 SUMMARY

It is important that this document compliments and contributes to the ongoing work and priorities of the Council and other key organisations in relation to events. The diagram overleaf summaries the links between the Action Plan and the areas outlined above. Recognising these links, this document will reflect the need to:

- Develop events that contribute to Belfast's distinctiveness;
- Provide exciting and enjoyable events that can contribute to 'improving the quality of life' for residents of Belfast and Northern Ireland;
- Ensure Council events are accessible to all sections of the community and allow for community input. This will also assist the Council in its delivery of its Cultural Framework for 2012-15 in that events will help create a heightened sense of community and civic pride;
- Continue to attract major international events that will change perceptions of Belfast and NI;
- Ensure that Belfast is associated with top class events on a year round basis and that events are used to grow out of season business and bring new visitors;
- Ensure events contribute to growing tourist numbers by creating or amending events to support the 'Best prospect' segments, particularly 'Young and Lively' and 'Social Energisers';

⁹Belfast City Centre Management survey, January 2009

- Showcase where possible the best of Belfast and Northern Ireland’s cultural and sporting talent;
- Develop sustainable events that create and grow employment opportunities and support the events industry;
- Work with partners to attract and deliver events and in doing so contribute to their priorities; and
- Contribute to the economy of Belfast and Northern Ireland by maximising the economic and social benefits of events.



3. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

This sets out a vision for the future of events in Belfast over the next few years. This vision seeks to capitalise on Belfast's growing reputation as a leading venue for world-class events while at the same time providing a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to attracting, supporting, delivering and marketing events.

To deliver the action plan the Council will lead on a number of objectives and will work collaboratively with event partners on others. An implementation plan details how the objectives will be achieved (see Appendix I).

VISION

The vision for events in Belfast is that:

*Belfast will be renowned as a leading events destination with a reputation for **high quality, innovative and distinctive** events. Events will continue to generate substantial economic, cultural and social impacts, contribute to the city's positive profile and provide visitors and citizens with a choice of events making sure they have enjoyable things to see and do when in Belfast.*

AIMS

In order to achieve this vision, three aims have been developed. These relate to events, impact and capacity and capability:

| Area | Aim |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Events | For Belfast to be recognised as a city that delivers a programme of high quality, innovative and distinctive events which attract and entertain residents and visitors alike |
| Impact | To maximise the impact events have on Belfast and the economic, social and cultural benefits that they bring to the city |
| Capacity and Capability | To develop the capacity and capability of Belfast to attract, support, deliver and market a wide range of high quality events and in doing so enhance the sustainability of the city's events sector |

4. EVENTS

Aim: For Belfast to be recognised as a city that delivers a programme high quality, innovative and distinctive events which attract and entertain residents and visitors alike

A key purpose of this action plan is to develop Belfast’s portfolio of events by focusing on attracting more ‘major events’ and creating a series of ‘signature experience events’ for the city. The Council also plans to further develop its programme of annual events. The diagram illustrates how the plans for events align with those set out in NITB’s Northern Ireland Events Plan 2014 – 2012.



4.1.1 MAJOR EVENTS

A major event can be defined as one which is held on a large scale, attracts a considerable number of visitors, participants and media interest and generates a substantial economic impact for the surrounding area¹⁰. Examples of major events that have been held in Belfast in the past few years include the World Irish Dancing Championships (four times in the last decade), 2005 U19 European Football Championships, 2006 Special Olympics Ireland Games, 2007 U19 World Cup Rugby, 2009 Junior and Cadet World Fencing Championships, 2001 World Amateur Boxing Championships, the 2009 Tall Ships Festival and the 2011 MTV EMA event. In 2012 Belfast also hosted several of the *ni2012 our time our place* events – Titanic Belfast Festival, Land of Giants and the 50th Belfast Festival at Queens.

In the future Belfast needs to continue to attract major events, like the World Police and Fire Games in 2013 and the Giro D’Italia in 2014. Through this action plan **the objective is to bring one major event to Belfast each year from 2015 onwards.**

Major events take a long time to source, evaluate and secure and in doing so require significant resources. The decision to bid for a major event is only made after an exhaustive assessment of the event’s history and feasibility and consultation with venues, associations, sponsors, the media and public sector bodies.

¹⁰ Events Management 1999, Bowdin et al

At present the Council attracts major events to the city by visiting event exhibitions and a number of major events each year to meet with event organisers. However it is recognised that there is a need to **develop a more strategic approach to bidding for and securing major events**. Through this action plan, the Council will work with other relevant organisations to do this by:

- Continually monitoring major events taking place in the UK, Europe and worldwide;
- Developing a **framework of criteria¹¹ to inform the decision making process of bidding for an event**. These criteria will be based around an event's ability to:
 - Demonstrate economic, social and cultural impact, including the potential to attract and engage local communities, particularly through participation and volunteering opportunities;
 - Attract visitors from 'Best Prospect' segments and deliver an enhanced visitor experience;
 - Support and develop the events industry in Belfast and across NI;
 - Leave a lasting legacy;
 - Enhance the profile and change the perception of Belfast;
 - Increase the status of Belfast as a place to live and visit; and
 - Demonstrate the capacity of Belfast to host top class events.
- Using the framework to assess up to 6 major events each year and identify those to bid for¹²;
- Bidding for one major event each year (in conjunction with the NITB Major Events Bidding Group) if appropriate to do so and resources are available;

The Council will also:

- Dedicate staff to lead and support the bidding process for major events;
- Continue to provide support to other organisations who take the lead on bidding for major events; and
- In securing major events also:
 - Identify key events which require volunteers and provide training and mentoring opportunities in order that volunteer resources are maximised;
 - Identify opportunities for participants to gain new skills through event associated activities such as workshops, classes and skills training in relevant sectors; and
 - Work with other sections of the Council who can identify opportunities for communities to get involved by organising local events in their area alongside the major event.

¹¹ See Appendix II for draft criteria

¹² The following is an exemplar list of possible major events - World Masters Games, Tour de France Prologue; awards ceremonies (e.g. BAFTA; Irish Film and Television Awards; Brit Awards) and touring events (e.g. BBC Radio One 'One Big Weekend' and Channel Four 'I Tunes' Festival);

4.1.2 SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE EVENTS

The competition for attendees at events is becoming increasingly challenging as the number and quality of events grow in Belfast and other local, national and international locations. In order to attract attendees, events are becoming increasingly innovative with rising standards in the delivery and programming. Often the most successful and attractive events are those that stand out as being **unique and distinctive**. They are also events that **cannot be found in other locations** because they **celebrate the indigenous heritage and culture of a place**. These events also have a greater appeal to tourists as they can associate them with a visit to a particular city or location.

In the Belfast events programme there is a wealth of indigenous events that through additional support could be developed into "signature experience events" for the city – i.e. events that are unique and distinct to Belfast, are innovative, represent quality and celebrate our heritage and culture. Through this action plan the aim is to **develop four new events or support existing events to grow into "signature" events for Belfast**. This will be undertaken by the Council with NITB and key partners (including the events industry and local communities) in line with plans set out in the NITB NI Events Plan (NI Home of Great Events). The aim would be to **develop the capacity to create events around key anniversary dates** e.g. Titanic 2012 centenary. It will be essential to develop a plan that identifies pertinent anniversaries that are relevant and that meet key events output criteria.

NITB – Northern Ireland Events Plan 2014 - 2016

"The development of bespoke Northern Ireland Tourism Experience Pillars presents clear opportunities to deliver unique Northern Ireland experiences to our visitors, helping to deliver the vision for events. These Signature Experience Events would be high quality, iconic and provide a unique Northern Ireland experience that will act as strong motivators for out of state visitors to come to Northern Ireland to specifically attend events. The events would also be a driving force for domestic and Republic of Ireland visitors to visit the region and enjoy the experience."

4.1.3 ANNUAL EVENTS

Each year the Council organises a range of events in Belfast; and funds or supports some of the seventy odd festivals in the city. These events are well established and are generally classified as 'broadly' cultural events, many of which coincide with public holidays and key occasions in the city's calendar. Through their events programme the Council aims to animate and showcase the city, create a vibrant atmosphere for residents and visitors, attract and involve the city's cultural sector, engage local communities and generate an economic impact.

Many of the events are generally free to access for the public and as such there is no financial return for the Council. However they do generate a substantial economic impact for the city. Through this action plan the Council will **continue to organise a year round programme of events each year and fund events through an array of funding streams**. We will also:

Events such as: 12th July, Feile, BFQ Festival of Fools, CQAF, City Easter Festival, Mela, Halloween, Christmas, Children's Festival, Autumn Fair, Titanic Maritime Festival, Belfast Marathon, Lord Mayor's Day, Rose Week, St Patrick's Day, Belfast Restaurant Week

- Assess the ongoing viability of each event to ensure that it meets the vision of the Council and its aims; are accessible to all sections of the community, and that events are delivered in an efficient and effective manner and represents value for money for the Council;

- Ensure that the events are sustainable and source additional funds to complement Council funding. We will examine ways of maximising income (through commercial opportunities, sponsorship and cross working with partners) maximising the marketing and promotion of events and arrangements with event service providers;
- Ensure events attract visitors to Belfast, particularly from other parts of Northern Ireland and from 'Best Prospect' segments in the GB and ROI markets;
- Identify key events which require volunteers and provide training and mentoring opportunities in order that volunteer resources are maximised; and
- Identify opportunities for participants to gain new skills through event associated activities such as workshops, classes and skills training in relevant sectors.

4.2 Attendance and Volunteering

Events in Belfast attract audiences not just from the city but from across Northern Ireland (NI) and internationally. Approximately 268,000 people live in Belfast city (soon to increase as part the impending Local Government Reform) while 645,536 live in the wider metropolitan area. This equates over a third of the Northern Ireland population of 1.8 million people. Arts and culture (including events and festivals) is thriving in Northern Ireland, with 82% of adults attending an arts event in 2012¹³. Attitudes towards the arts are also very positive with 81% of people agreeing they help to enrich the quality of our lives and 87% believing the arts help bring visitors to Northern Ireland.

Visitors to Belfast are also likely to attend events. There were 7.59 million visitor trips to Belfast in 2012 with a direct tourism spend of £416 million¹⁴. 1.75 million out of state overnight tourists visited Belfast and spent one or more nights in the city. Of this number 583,000 were business visitors (including 88,000 conference delegates). Some of these visitors came to Belfast for an event or attended a cultural or sporting event while in the city; however it is not currently a significant motivating factor in visiting.

The Republic of Ireland (ROI) market continues to be the dominant market in Belfast tourism (73% of all out of state trips). Great Britain (GB) accounts for a further 22%. This leaves 5% of overnight visitors to the city having come from outside the British Isles.

The large population and substantial visitor numbers provide a healthy potential audience base for events in Belfast.

Major events in the past few years have attracted a large number of attendees, with the largest attendance (750,000) at the Tall Ships in 2009. **Volunteers** have also helped to deliver a number of events in Belfast over the past few years, most notably the 2013 World, Police and Fire Games, Special Olympics Games Ireland in 2006, Belfast Marathon and Tall Ships 2009.

| Event | Attendees | Event | Volunteers |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| 2005 U19 UEFA | 20,000 | 2013 World Police & Fire Games | 3,500 |
| 2007 U19 World Cup Rugby | 15,000 | Belfast Marathon (2013) | 100 |
| 2008 World Irish Dancing Championships | 17,000 | Special Olympic Games Ireland | 1,300 |
| 2009 Tall Ships | 750,000 | Tall Ships (2009) | 100 |
| 2011 MTV EMA | 70,000 | | |
| 2012 Titanic Belfast Festival | 90,000 ¹⁵ | | |
| 2013 World Police & Fire Games | 7,000 | | 4,500 |

4.2.1 Attendance at Events

¹³ Arts and Culture in Northern Ireland 2012, Arts Council of Northern Ireland

¹⁴Source: Belfast Tourism Monitor 2012

¹⁵ Source: NITB Events Strategy (draft)

The majority of attendees at are from the Belfast area, with significant numbers also attending from the rest of Northern Ireland. The number of attendees at events from outside Northern Ireland varies depending on the time of year and the nature of the event. In 2012 they were highest at the Titanic Festival (48% of those surveyed) and on average just over 12% of attendees are from outside Northern Ireland.

Attracting people back to annual events every year is a key to growing attendance levels. Survey results show that repeat attendance levels at events are over 40% and those surveyed also have high intentions to revisit events (an average of 74%)¹⁶. In order to increase attendance levels we will:

- Examine the effectiveness of previous marketing campaigns using information captured through event surveys;
- Identify market segments that are under-represented and create a marketing plan to address these;
- Utilise the calendar of events to improve the scheduling and maximise attendance numbers at events;
- Improve the quality of events by responding to suggestions made by event attendees and suppliers;
- Undertake research to understand the factors that drive repeat attendance at events; and
- Work with Visit Belfast, NITB and Tourism Ireland to promote events through their marketing and communication activities to 'best prospect' segments in order to increase the number of visitors from outside Northern Ireland coming to events.

4.3 Summary of Objectives and key actions

The table below summaries the objectives and key actions that the Council will lead on and those that will be undertaken collectively by the Council and event partners.

In developing and improving Belfast's portfolio of events will contribute to the tourism priorities for the City and will:

- Improve the position of Belfast in the tourism and event markets;
- Contribute to Belfast's distinctiveness;
- Continue to attract major international events;
- Ensure that Belfast is associated with top class events on a year round basis and that events are used to grow out of season business and bring new visitors; and
- Ensure that events contribute to growing tourist numbers by creating or amending events to support the 'Best prospect' segments, particularly 'Young and Lively' and 'Social Energisers'.

EVENT ATTENDEES

Men and women equally attend events – on average 50% are male and 50% female

People of all ages come to events however approximately 80% are between the ages of 16 and 54

Families make up the largest group of attendees (40%)

Two-thirds of attendees are from a middle-class background (ABC1)

51% of attendees are from Belfast, 37% from the rest of NI and 12% from outside Northern Ireland

| | Council | Collectively |
|--------------|---|--|
| Major Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a framework of criteria to inform the decision making process of bidding for a major event | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To host one major high quality event each year |

¹⁶ Figures based on average of 2010, 2011 and 2012 attendance at BCC annual events

| | Council | Collectively |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To dedicate staff to lead and support the bidding process for major events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a more strategic approach to bidding for and securing major events |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to provide support to other organisations who take the lead on bidding for major events | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify opportunities for volunteering, skills development and associated local events | |
| Signature Experience Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop the capacity to create events around key anniversary dates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop 4 "signature experience events" for Belfast |
| Annual Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deliver an improved programme of annual events each year | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the overall number of people coming to annual events by 5% each year | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the average level of repeat attendance to 55% | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the number of visitors from outside NI attending events by 5% each year | |

5.IMPACT

Aim: To maximise the impact events have on Belfast and the economic, social and cultural benefits that they bring to the city

This section considers the impact of events in Belfast. Plans are set out for the development of an assessment framework in order to provide a more structured and systematic approach to determining the impact of events. Consideration is also given to how to encourage and support more volunteering and participation opportunities and how event champions/ambassadors can help to promote Belfast as an event location.

5.1 ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF COUNCIL EVENTS

Over the last number of years Belfast City Council has consistently collected information on the performance of its events in the city¹⁷. This information has been collated from a variety of different sources using different data capture methods; for this reason the information collected is not always directly comparable and therefore does not provide us with a comprehensive understanding of the full impact of our events.

There is therefore a need to **implement a more structured and systematic approach to determining the impact of events** and in understanding more accurately the true value of events to the city. Assessing the full impacts of events is a difficult task, and requires a variety of elements to be taken into account. These include, but are not limited to:

- The economic impact;
- The benefit to a city or location's image, reputation and perception;
- The social and cultural impact and improvements to quality of life for both visitors and residents; and
- The legacy of an event.

To justify the investment in events, it is necessary to accurately assess the difference that events make to Belfast. We will therefore review the information we currently gather and the methods of doing so. We will also **develop an impact assessment framework**¹⁸ which will capture detailed information on the full impact of events. The assessment framework will be based on best practice¹⁹ and will take into account the following:

- Economic impact;
- Social and cultural impacts, including:
 - Satisfaction;
 - Identity, image and place (e.g. perceptions of Belfast, views of local communities/residents);
 - Participation;
 - Volunteering; and
- Media coverage to assess the effect on reputation and image.

The information will be gathered from a range of stakeholders including attendees/spectators, participants/competitors, volunteers, event organisers, businesses, sponsors, funders and local communities/residents. We will work with existing survey research undertaken by the Council, Visit Belfast (e.g. the Tourism Monitor) and NITB and adapt the information currently collected where necessary.

¹⁷ Information captured relates to areas such as economic impact, out-of-state visitor numbers, perceptions and satisfaction levels

¹⁸ See Appendix III for draft framework

¹⁹ For example event IMPACTS (developed by UK Sport, Visit Britain and other key organisations)

The **adoption of a common impact assessment framework** will also allow the impact of different events to be compared and assist in predicting outcomes for future events. The ability to establish these areas of comparability (as well as differences) is important in gaining an overall view of events in Belfast and in making assessments about the size and characteristics for future events that Belfast may host.

The impact assessment framework will be reviewed after one year to assess its effect and changes will be implemented where necessary. Subsequently an annual report will be prepared which will summarise the impact of Council events in Belfast.

5.2 Economic Impact

An important part of an event's overall impact is its direct and indirect economic impact. Economic impact assessment methodologies are well tried and tested techniques for estimating the effect that additional expenditure has upon the economy. The task is to be able to calculate the impacts, taking into account the effects of direct and indirect expenditure resulting from the event and induced expenditure and displacements, using acknowledged multipliers.

In Scotland for tourism and arts events, multipliers were developed in the early 1990s under the Scottish Tourism Multiplier Study (STMS) but there is a choice about using different multipliers against different forms of expenditure – e.g. food and drink, accommodation or travel. At present the economic impact assessments carried out for the Council use 0.8 as the multiplier (NITB operate an assessment multiplier of 1.25).

In order to ensure that the assessments capture as accurately as possible the full range of direct and indirect impacts we will undertake a review of our existing assessments and incorporate additional elements where necessary with both internal and external partners of the Council. We will continue to measure the return on investment which events have through economic impact assessments and use the findings to assess the potential of future events. We will also use the information to promote Belfast and help attract visitors and investors in order to create further jobs and infrastructure for the city.

5.3 Social and Cultural Impacts

The social and cultural impact of events can be difficult to gauge, however methods are improving and several toolkits are available to assist with this process²⁰. The Council's Culture and Arts Unit has developed a Social and Economic Toolkit for Festivals, and Community Services Unit use the Volunteering Impact Assessment Toolkit. There are a number of key factors that can be assessed such as satisfaction, identity image and place (including residents' perception of the city), community participation (e.g. through event associated workshops and classes), skills and volunteering (see below). Information on satisfaction levels we will also aim to capture information in relation to each of these other areas as part of the impact assessment framework and will revise our information collection methods and surveys in order to do so. We will use the findings to ensure that events are delivering a range of benefits such as providing exciting and enjoyable events, improving the quality of life of residents, promoting social cohesion and ensuring events are accessible to all sections of the community.

5.4 Satisfaction Levels

There is currently no standardised method of capturing the impact of large-scale events that take place in Belfast. Over the next few years the Council will therefore work with event organisers, NITB, In Any Event, and others in the events and cultural sectors to develop and implement a standardised way of assessing the impact of their events in the city, based on the impact assessment framework developed by the Council. This information will therefore help to give an overall picture of the impact of events in Belfast.

²⁰ For example event IMPACTS (developed by UK Sport, Visit Britain and other key organisations)

High satisfaction levels are also vital to the success of Belfast events and encouraging repeat attendance. Currently event surveys, by the Council, captures a variety of information on satisfaction levels; attendees are asked to rate different elements of the event, say whether it met their expectations and if they would recommend the event to others. Recent survey results show that satisfaction levels are high – the average event rating in 2013 was 8.2 out of 10.

However, event surveys also capture attendees’ suggestions as to how specific elements of the events can be improved – suggestions range from improved access to more varied entertainment and better facilities.

It is imperative that we recognise the need to continually improve the quality of Belfast events. Our objective is to **maintain satisfaction levels of at least 9 out of 10 across all our annual events**. It is also important to use information gathered to implement feasible suggestions made by attendees to improve events. It is also vital that a process to improve the capture of equality information (Section 75) is created, so that we can ensure that Belfast events are not having an adverse affect on any particular section of the community.

5.5 VOLUNTEERING

Many events are dependent on volunteers. They provide a valuable resource and bring to the event their skills, experience and enthusiasm. Volunteers have helped to deliver a number of events in Belfast over the past few years; most notably the 2013 World Police and Fire Games, Special Olympics Ireland Games, Belfast Marathon, Maritime Festival and Tall Ships. And many of the Council funded festivals and events are dependent upon an unseen troop of volunteers.

Through this plan actions will be developed, which will provide opportunities for volunteers to assist with events in Belfast. We will do this by working with event organisers and volunteer bodies, such as Volunteer Now, to **establish a database of groups and individuals that are willing to volunteer at events**. We will identify key events which require volunteers and **provide training and mentoring opportunities** in order that volunteer resources are maximised for all events within the city. We will also capture information about the impact of volunteering through the event assessment framework.

5.6 EVENT CHAMPIONS AND AMBASSADORS

The utilisation of key individuals to promote Belfast as a key event location is important. These ‘Champions/Ambassadors’ would be individuals from both public and private sectors who recognise the important role that major events can bring to Belfast and NI. It would be the intention of this plan for key partners, particularly Visit Belfast, the Council, NITB and Tourism Ireland, to identify these individuals within the national and international events market.

5.1 Summary of Objectives and key actions

The table below summaries the objectives and key actions that the Council will lead on and those that will be undertaken collectively by the Council and event partners.

| | Council | Collectively |
|--|---------|--------------|
|--|---------|--------------|

| | Council | Collectively |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| All Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To better understand the value of events to Belfast by improving the quality of information gathered in relation to the impact and benefits of events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement a standardised way of assessing the impact of events in Belfast |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop an impact assessment framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint individuals to act as Event Champions and Ambassadors |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase volunteering and participation opportunities available at events | |
| Annual Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain satisfaction levels of at least 9/10 across all annual events | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the economic impact of annual events in Belfast by 5% per year | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve a return rate of investment for the Council of £3 for every £1 spent | |
| Major & Signature Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To achieve a return rate of investment of £5 for every £1 spent | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> | |

6. CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

Aim: To develop the capacity and capability of Belfast to attract, support, deliver and market a wide range of high quality events and in doing so enhance the sustainability of the city's events

This section examines the marketing and communication of information about events, how Belfast's profile as an event location can be improved, and how we can collectively grow and sustain events in Belfast through developing skills and capacity.

MARKETING OF EVENTS

6.1.1 Marketing of Events to Residents

Belfast events tend to be marketed to residents (of Belfast and NI) through a variety of channels – social media (Twitter and Facebook), newspapers, billboards, radio and TV, and the Council and Visit Belfast websites. Overall Belfast events uses a generic (mass marketing) approach, and while this is successful in promoting an awareness of events and encouraging attendance, it does not allow us to target particular segments of the market that are under-represented. Such a move would benefit not just the Council events but events supported by the Council.

Each year the city's events organisers gather information about the profile of attendees at events through event surveys and economic impact studies; this includes information about the origin of attendees, party size and attendees' expenditure. The results of these studies allow organisations to identify which sections of the community are represented at events – for example young people, adults over 65 and out-of-state visitors. For example the Council's data shows that there is good attendance by most sections of the community, but there is a need to widen participation further and ensure that events are accessible to all. Through this document the Council will develop a **more focused approach to the marketing of events to residents for all event organisers**. We will attempt to undertake to:

- A better understanding of the effectiveness of current marketing campaigns to residents and make improvements where possible;
- Identify and target key resident segments that are under-represented and develop marketing initiatives to increase attendance from these segments at all events; and
- Promote volunteer and community involvement opportunities for residents through the Volunteer Now website and other available channels.

6.1.2 Marketing of Events to Visitors

Events can make a positive contribution to the decision to visit a city and on the overall enjoyment of the experience. In marketing events to visitors the Council works closely with Visit Belfast to advertise events through channels such as the Visit Belfast website and About Belfast guide.

Belfast's Tourism: Gateway to the Future notes that major events provide a catalyst to drive visitor growth and *Northern Ireland Home of Great Events* highlights that through developing bespoke events and enhancing existing events this can act as clear motivators for visitors to come to Northern Ireland. However while Belfast's events currently attract a certain amount of out of state visitors, Tourism Monitor results show that at present events are not significant motivating factors in the decision to visit the city. However over half of all visitors are drawn to Belfast to holiday and to enjoy Belfast's scenery and relaxing ambiance. Research also shows that certain events do attract substantial numbers of people

from outside Northern Ireland. There is therefore the potential to attract more visitors to Belfast events; this could be done through integrating events into marketing campaigns to enhance the tourism offering of the city.

Through this action plan we will develop a **more focused approach to the marketing of events to visitors** and aim to improve the position of Belfast in the tourism market. We will undertake to:

- Identify effective marketing from previous events and utilise this to improve marketing at events in the future;
- Identify and target key visitor segments that are under-represented and develop marketing initiatives to increase attendance from these segments;
- Work with Belfast City Council's Corporate Communications to integrate with other promotional activity being undertaken by the Council, such as the 'Be Belfast' branding; and
- Work with Visit Belfast, NITB and Tourism Ireland to enhance the marketing and promotion of events to visitors and through this to increase the number of people surveyed in the Tourism Monitor that cite events as a reason for visiting Belfast.

6.1.3 BELFAST'S PROFILE AS AN EVENT LOCATION

One of the key factors in being able to attract major events to Belfast is the profile of the city as an events location. Belfast's international profile has developed greatly in the past few years thanks to factors such as the restoration of the Assembly and the investments that have taken place in commercial developments, infrastructure and jobs. Our tourism profile has also increased rapidly (7.59 million visitor trips in 2013); as has the profile and popularity of the city as a conference location (88,000 conferences visitors came in 2013).

While Belfast has secured a number of major events in the past few years, there is a **growing need to develop the profile of Belfast among international event organisers**, in the same way that the city has developed in other areas. Events are seen as a highly competitive global industry²¹ with many cities and countries establishing separate organisations which are responsible for actively targeting and attracting events that can provide substantial economic impact and/or international profile. In order to attract major events, Belfast too must dedicate resources to building the profile of the city as an events location.

There are a number of ways in which stakeholders currently work to grow the profile of Belfast as an events location and attract major events. Attendance at event exhibitions provides access to a number of key events and event organisers. In addition it would be the intention to meet with event organisers to assess the potential and interest levels of bringing these events to Belfast. To increase the attractiveness of events in Belfast we also need to develop a range of additional opportunities such as corporate entertainment, on-site hospitality and sponsorship opportunities.

There is a need to be more strategic in Belfast's approach towards targeting major events and a number of activities will be undertaken to support this. Firstly the Council will work to create and **establish an event stakeholder group** that will assist in the oversight of events delivery in the city. Secondly, the Council will work with its partners, especially NITB, Visit Belfast and Tourism Ireland and **undertake research to understand the current profile of Belfast as an events location**. We will gather information about the perception of the city among event organisers and about barriers to hosting events in the city. We will then agree how best to grow Belfast's profile and draw up an action plan to address the issues raised.

In conjunction with the key partners mentioned we will also **develop an international programme of marketing activity**. This will include promotional attendance at key event

²¹ 'A Strategy for Major Events in England's Northwest, Northwest Development Agency, March 2004

conferences and exhibitions in order to raise the profile of Belfast as an events location. This will tie in with existing marketing activity and to the overall branding and promotion of Belfast as a city.

6.1.4 COMMUNICATIONS

As well as developing the profile of Belfast as an events location, it is also important to build the profile and reputation of Belfast's events both locally and further afield. We also need to promote the success of past events to help attract future larger events as well as new promoters.

In order to do this the key stakeholders (Council, NITB, Visit Belfast, Tourism Ireland, Cultural Stakeholders, Event Promoters) will **develop a Communications Plan for events (including major and signature)**. The plan will leverage the synergy of marketing and public relations to create more public interest and attendance at events than would otherwise be achieved.

It will mean **developing relationships with local, national and international media and key influencers** (e.g. journalists and travel editors) and encourage them to visit Belfast and experience and subsequently promote our events. We will also **develop communications with the media** through press packs and e-marketing to inform them about key events, developments and event opportunities.

6.1.5 Growth and Sustainability

The contribution of events to the city's economy and tourist offerings is significant and it is therefore important that all events in Belfast, including Council events, are assisted to grow and become more sustainable in the future. To support this there are a number of areas that the action plan will focus on.

6.1.6 Scheduling of Events

Through this action plan we will aim to **improve the way events, particularly large-scale events, are scheduled throughout the year**. The scheduling of events is important for a number of reasons:

- It ensures that a broad range of events are programmed throughout the year, providing variety and interest for attendees;
- It helps to reduce the seasonality of the tourism offering by ensuring that there is a reason for visitors to come to Belfast at all times of the year;
- It helps to ensure that large events do not coincide or overlap at specific times of the year, or that if they do 'clash' they create a critical mass that makes Belfast more attractive for the residents and visitors; and
- The scheduling of events can be crucial to maximising attendance and social, cultural and economic impacts.

It is important, therefore, that when an event is timetabled not only its position in the year, but also its positioning against the calendar of events around it is considered.

The Council will **input to the development of a comprehensive calendar of events in Belfast** which will be used to ensure that there is a more focused approach to the scheduling of events throughout the year. The calendar can also help with the many enquiries we receive from other event organisers about the timing of events in the city. We will also work with all our internal and external partners and other event organisers to co-ordinate a more strategic approach to the developing and scheduling of events.

6.1.7 Physical Infrastructure

Belfast holds events in a variety of locations across the city each year, both indoors and outdoors in public spaces. The size, capacity and facilities of venues are contributing factors in where the events are held and in securing and staging major events for Belfast. While some events require one large scale venue, others can be held in a number of smaller venues. At present Belfast does not have a large enough venue for some major events, however our strengths lie in organising and securing those events that can be held across a number of smaller venues. Recent improvements to the culture and arts infrastructure (e.g. the MAC, the Lyric Theatre, Ulster Museum) and conference facilities (Titanic Belfast and the planned Belfast Waterfront hall extension) have helped and will help with capacity and facilities. Three sports grounds are also currently being redeveloped (Ravenhill Rugby Ground, Windsor Park and Casement Park) and when finished will also result in increased capacity, although not of the scale required for larger major sporting events.

Our knowledge of Belfast's event venues is based upon information gathered from various sources however at present it is incomplete. We therefore need to develop a greater understanding of the physical infrastructure for events in Belfast. To do this the Council, corporately via its Licensing Section, will **undertake an audit of venues across the city and capture the information gathered in an events venue database**. This will be referenced against Sport NI's similar study on sporting venues. The information gathered:

- Will provide a better understanding of each venue's capacity and facilities. It will also enable us to judge a venue's capacity to host certain events and earmark areas that may require upgrading and or investment in order to accommodate certain events;
- Will assist when bidding for major events and in promoting Belfast as an events location to event organisers. It will also enable organisers to consider holding events across a wider geographic area of Belfast rather than just the city centre;
- Could also be of benefit to others. We will engage with venues across the city to feedback the results of the audit and we will also make the information gathered available when requested by other event organisers and promoters; and
- Will help to encourage the development of further infrastructure to support the additional demand resulting from larger events (e.g. additional hotel and exhibition facilities).

6.1.8 Skills Development and Best Practice

As we aim to grow and develop events in Belfast, the success of these events will not only be determined by their range and scale, but also by the capacity and capabilities of organisers to deliver events. We must also meet the demands of major event promoters/organisers and the high standards they expect. For this reason it is beneficial to continually develop the skills and knowledge of event organisers in Belfast. It is important to develop the city's events capabilities through addressing skills gaps and availing of training and development opportunities. These skills will in turn be used to inform and direct events across the city. The Council should also further develop its adhoc approach to providing assistance to event organisers, which includes:

- Advice and guidance provided by City Events Unit staff to voluntary and community groups organising local events;
- Advice and guidance provided by the Parks and Leisure Department (including event planning guides); and
- The Central Grants Unit re Council and other stakeholder funding.

As part of this plan the Council will **continue to support external event organisers** through offering guidance and advice where possible and **support the work of the events industry trade association, In Any Event**.

In order to provide more structured assistance to external event organisers the Council will **commission the development of an 'Events Development Toolkit'** that can assist event organisers to enhance their skills in key areas such as marketing, income generation, event management and business planning. It would be hoped that this will assist a wide

variety of event organisers, such as community groups, volunteer organisations and non-professional event groups, in the planning, management and delivery of events, without physically delivering the events, which the Council does not have the capacity or remit to do so.

Developments outside Belfast and Northern Ireland can also help to improve our knowledge of organising and promoting events. We will continue to build relationships with national and international event organisers and associations such UK Sport, International Festival and Events Association, National Outdoor Events Association (UK), Association of Irish Festivals and Events and the Centre for Festivals and Event Management, to learn about best practice and new methods that may benefit events in Belfast. The information we gather will be shared to benefit all those involved in events in the city.

6.2 Summary of Objectives and key actions

The table below summaries the objectives and key actions that the Council will lead on and those that will be undertaken collectively by the Council and event partners.

| Council | Collectively |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a more focused approach to the marketing of Council events to residents and visitors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work together to market and grow the profile of Belfast as an events location amongst international event organisers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To input into the development of a comprehensive calendar of events for Belfast | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish an event stakeholder group |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake an audit of venues in Belfast and capture the information in an events venue database | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake research to understand the current profile of Belfast as an events location |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to support external event organisers and the work of In Any Event | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop an international programme of marketing activity for events |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To commission the development of an 'Events Development Toolkit' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a communications plan for events |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop positive communications with media and key influencers to enhance the reputation of Belfast and its events |

7. IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Funding

The Council currently allocates £XXXXm to its events programme via its grants and event funding.

In total £XXXX million is funding is allocated for events in festivals across the city. While on average the Council spend around £1.3 million on its own events such as St Patrick's Day, the City Easter Festival, Belfast Titanic Maritime Festival, etc.

7.1.1 Review of Funding

Through the creation of the Council's Central Grants Unit it has been possible to ascertain an understanding of multiple funding of events and festivals throughout the city. From this significant economic savings have been made.

However, as stated on average the Council spends around £1.3 million on its own events programme (inclusive of Belfast City Council's Parks and Leisure and Development Departments). It would be intention of this plan to review how this funding is allocated and how it could be redirected to enhance external-Council event organiser's projects. This would entail a review of the current Council events managed and delivered calendar. Therefore, it may mean a larger amount of finance being made available to the Council's Central Grants Unit and in turn to the cultural events sector in Belfast. The concept is not to develop new funding strands, but rather to focus on more efficient and effective methods of assisting groups to stage events and funding for larger-scaled events.

7.1.2 Bidding for Major Ad-hoc One-off Events

The bidding for major international events is a process that requires resources not just to put Belfast's name in front of those organisations who own the rights to such events, it also has significant finances attached to the delivery of such events. Therefore, the action plan will take recognition of these costs. Although such a process may be lead by the Council, other sports, arts and cultural organisations would be encouraged to engage in bringing large international events to the city.

7.2 Summary of Objectives and key actions

The table below summaries the objectives and key actions that the Council will lead on and those that will be undertaken collectively by the Council and event partners.

| Council | Collectively |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">To undertake an audit of funding of Council events and in turn review the events the Council stages | <ul style="list-style-type: none">To work with key stakeholders to review the Council's events programme |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Through the above review redefine the allocation of Council finances for the overall city events and cultural sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify via stakeholders opportunities to enhance funding for the events and festival sector through existing Council funding |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">As part of the review of Council finances identify resources to assist with bidding for major ad-hoc one-off events | <ul style="list-style-type: none">To work with key stakeholders to garner resources to bid for major one-off events |

Appendix I Action Plan 2014 - 2016



Aim: For Belfast to be recognised as a city that delivers a programme of innovative and high quality events which attracts and entertains residents and visitors alike

| | Objectives | Actions | Target | Lead | Support | *Timescale/Costs |
|-----|---|---|---|------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1.1 | By 2016 to develop a portfolio of events by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> hosting one "major" high quality²² event each year from 2015 and beyond | 1. To continually monitor all major UK, EU and worldwide events | | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 – 2016 |
| | | 2. To develop a framework of criteria to inform the decision making process of bidding for an event | Framework developed by December 2014 | City Events Unit | | 2014 |
| | | 3. Each year identify and assess (through the above framework) 6 major events | | City Events Unit | | 2015 |
| | | 4. Each year to bid for at least one major event | | City Events Unit | | 2015 |
| | | 5. Dedicating staff to lead and support the bidding process for major events | To secure one major event for Belfast each year from 2014 to 2016 | City Events Unit | | 2015 - 2016 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivering a programme of annual events each year | 1. To deliver a significant number annual events each year | | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2014 - 2016 |
| | | 2. To assess the viability of each event on a yearly basis to ensure that it meets the vision and aims of the action plan, is delivered in an efficient and effective manner and represents value for money | Ensure that existing pre and post event evaluation reports to incorporate action plans and objectives | City Events Unit | | 2014 – 2016 |
| | | 3. To examine ways of maximising income, marketing and promotion of events. | | City Events Unit | | 2015 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing the innovative nature of events delivered. These would be unique to Belfast and which can be seen as "signature" | 1. To identify certain events that have the ability to become "signature" events for the city | Four events identified | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 |
| | | 2. To continue to provide support to other organisations who take the lead on bidding for major events | | City Events Unit | | 2015-2016 |

| | Objectives | Actions | Target | Lead | Support | *Timescale/Costs |
|-----|--|--|---|------------------|---|-------------------------|
| | events for the city. | | | | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop the capacity to create events programmes in regard to key anniversary dates e.g. Titanic centenary programme | 1. To develop a plan that identifies pertinent anniversaries that are relevant and that meet key events output criteria | By the end of 2015 develop an outline plan that shows pertinent Belfast anniversaries that meets an agreed Council events output criteria | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 |
| 1.2 | To grow attendance at Belfast City Council events by 5% each year | 1. To understand the effectiveness of current marketing campaigns at encouraging attendance at events using information captured through event surveys | Internal research to be completed | City Events Unit | BCC Corporate Communications, Visit Belfast, NITB & Tourism Ireland and external event partners | 2016 |
| | | 2. To identify market segments that are under-represented and create a marketing plan to address these | Marketing plan to be completed | City Events Unit | BCC Corporate Communications, Visit Belfast, NITB & Tourism Ireland and external event partners | 2015 |
| | | 3. To utilise the calendar of events (see objective 3.4) to improve the scheduling of events to maximise attendance | Improved scheduling of events | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 |

| | Objectives | Actions | Target | Lead | Support | *Timescale/Costs |
|-----|---|--|---|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| | | 4. To improve the quality of events to maximise attendance by responding to feasible suggestions made by event attendees and suppliers | Suggestions to be implemented | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 |
| | | 5. To continue to capture attendance at events and improve tracking systems where possible | Improved methods of capturing attendance levels | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2016 |
| 1.3 | To increase the average level of repeat attendance at annual events to 55% by 2016 | 1. To undertake research to understand the factors that drive repeat attendance at events | Internal research ongoing | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 |
| | | 2. To improve the quality of events to maximise attendance by responding to feasible suggestions made by event attendees and suppliers | Suggestions to be implemented | City Events Unit | | 2016 |
| 1.4 | To increase the number of visitors from outside Northern Ireland attending events by 5% by 2016 | As per Objective 1.2: | | | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | |
| | | 1. To understand the effectiveness of current marketing campaigns at encouraging attendance at events using information captured through event surveys | Internal research ongoing | City Events Unit | | 2015 |
| | | 2. To identify market segments that are under-represented and create a marketing plan to address these | Marketing plan ongoing | City Events Unit | | 2015 |
| | | 3. To increase the number of people surveyed in the Tourism Monitor that cite events as a reason for visiting Belfast | To create a baseline target figure | BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts | | 2016 |

| | Objectives | Actions | Target | Lead | Support | *Timescale/Costs |
|-----|--|--|-------------------------------|------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1.5 | To maintain satisfaction levels of at least 9 out of 10 across all annual events | 1. To review the information captured in visitor surveys in relation to satisfaction levels and to improve this where possible | Review to be completed | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 |
| | | 2. To implement feasible suggestions on an ongoing basis made by attendees to improve events | Suggestions to be implemented | City Events Unit | | 2016 |
| | | 3. To work with event service providers and partners to improve the quality of services | Suggestions to be implemented | City Events Unit | | 2016 |

Aim: To maximise the impact events have on Belfast and the economic and social benefits they bring to the city

| | Objectives | Actions | Target | Lead | Support | *Timescale |
|-----|---|---|--|------------------|---|-------------------|
| 2.1 | To better understand the value of events to Belfast by improving the quality of information gathered in relation to the impact and benefits of events | 1. To develop an assessment framework which can determine the full impact of events in Belfast | Assessment framework developed | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 |
| | | 2. To subsequently use the assessment framework to carry out impact surveys at BCC and other events | Assessment framework implemented | City Events Unit | | 2015-2016 |
| | | 3. To review the effectiveness of the assessment framework after one year and implement changes where needed | Assessment framework reviewed | City Events Unit | | 2016 |
| | | 4. To prepare annually a report that summarises the impact of events in Belfast and to distribute this to partners and event organisers | Annual report prepared | City Events Unit | | 2015 - 2016 |
| | | 5. To include event related questions in Tourism Monitor survey and the NI Visitor Attitudes surveys | Questions included in surveys | City Events Unit | | 2015 - 2016 |
| 2.2 | To increase the economic impact of annual events in Belfast by 5% per year | 1. To continue to measure economic impact through economic impact assessments | | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 - 2016 |
| | | 2. To review information gathered through economic impact assessments and incorporate additional elements where necessary | Review completed | City Events Unit | | 2015 - 2016 |
| 2.3 | To achieve a return rate of investment for the Council of £6 for every £1 spent | 1. To continue to measure return on investment through economic impact assessments | To provide a £1:6 return at end of action plan | City Events Unit | | 2015 - 2016 |
| 2.4 | To gather information on the social impacts and returns of events | As per Objective 2.1 | | City Events Unit | Internal and external event organisers | 2015 – 2016 |

| | Objectives | Actions | Target | Lead | Support | *Timescale |
|-----|--|---|---|--|---|-------------------|
| 2.5 | To increase volunteering and participation opportunities available at events | 1. Establish a database of groups and individuals willing to volunteer at events and work volunteer groups | Database established | City Events Unit | BCC Community Development, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, Sport NI; NICVA; NITB and Volunteer Now | 2015 – 2016 |
| | | 2. Identify events which require volunteers | Events identified on an annual basis | City Events Unit | | 2015 – 2016 |
| | | 3. Provide training and mentoring opportunities for volunteers via volunteer groups e.g. Volunteer Now | Develop the Council's relationship with volunteer organisations | City Events Unit | | 2015 – 2016 |
| | | 4. Identify opportunities for participants to gain new skills through event associated activities such as workshops, classes and skills training in relevant sectors | Opportunities identified and promoted | BCC Community Development BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts | | 2015 – 2016 |
| | | 5. Work with other sections of the Council who can identify opportunities for communities to get involved by organising local events in their area alongside major events | Opportunities identified and promoted | BCC Community Development BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts | | 2015 – 2016 |
| 2.6 | To appoint individuals to act as Event Champions and Ambassadors | 1. To establish ambassadors to promote Belfast as national and international events destinations | Create events champions to act as ambassadors for city events | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2014 |

Aim: To develop the capacity and capability of Belfast to attract, deliver and market a wide range of high quality events and in doing so enhance the sustainability of the city's events

| | Objectives | Actions | Target | Lead | Support | *Timescale |
|-----|--|---|---|------------------|---|-------------------|
| 3.1 | To enhance the marketing of events and introduce targeted marketing initiatives | 1. To understand the effectiveness of current marketing campaigns | Undertake internal research on current marketing campaigns | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | Ongoing |
| | | 2. To identify effective marketing from previous and current BCC events and to utilise this to improve marketing at other events | Implement best practice from events | City Events Unit | | Ongoing |
| | | 3. To identify in conjunction with partners key resident segments and the effectiveness of current marketing activities in reaching these segments | Undertake internal research on current marketing activities to segments | City Events Unit | | Ongoing |
| | | 4. In conjunction with partners to identify specific resident segments to target across the event calendar each year | Target segments to be identified | City Events Unit | | 2015 |
| 3.2 | To work with our partners to market and grow the profile of Belfast as an events location for event organisers by creating an events stakeholder group | 1. Create and establish an event stakeholder group that will assist in the oversight of events delivery in the city | Creation of partner stakeholder group | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 |
| | | 2. In conjunction with key partners to undertake research to understand the current profile of Belfast as an events location | Undertake internal research | City Events Unit | | 2015 |
| | | 3. In conjunction with key partners to consider and agree how best to grow the profile of Belfast as an events destination | Action plan to be developed with partners | City Events Unit | | 2015 |
| | | 4. To develop and launch an international programme of marketing activity to event organisers from 2014 to 2016 in order to raise the profile of Belfast as an event location | Programme launched by end of 2014 | City Events Unit | | 2015 |

| | Objectives | Actions | Target | Lead | Support | *Timescale |
|-----|---|---|---|--|--|-------------------|
| | | 5. To evaluate the success of the marketing activity | Internal evaluation report complete | City Events Unit | | 2015 |
| 3.3 | To develop positive communications with partners and the media to enhance the reputation of Belfast and its events | 1. In conjunction with BCC Corporate Communications to develop and implement a communications plan for the period of the events action plan | Communications plan developed | Corporate Communications | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2014 - 2016 |
| | | 2. To evaluate the success of the communications plan through key indicators such as media tracking | Internal evaluation report completed each year | City Events Unit with Corporate Communications | | 2015 - 2016 |
| | | 3. Corporate Communications to introduce and deliver PR campaigns for signature events from 2014 – 2016 with influencers | PR campaigns delivered | City Events Unit with Corporate Communications | | 2015 – 2016 |
| | | 4. To identify key media influencers (BCC –locally, Visit Belfast/Tourism Ireland nationally and internationally) and target them to visit and experience events in Belfast with a view to promoting them | Media influencers identified and targeted | City Events Unit with Corporate Communications | | 2015 – 2016 |
| | | 5. To work with Visit Belfast/Tourism Ireland on an ongoing basis to encourage journalists on FAM visits to attend events | Five journalists per year to attend events | City Events Unit with Corporate Communications | | 2015 – 2016 |
| | | 6. To communicate with key partners and the media through quarterly e-marketing to inform them about key events, market research and opportunities | E-marketing communications sent quarterly from 2014 onwards | City Events Unit with Corporate Communications | | 2015 – 2016 |
| 3.4 | To assist the growth and sustainability of events in Belfast by encouraging, working with and supporting event organisers in the city | 1. To assist in the development of a comprehensive calendar of events to facilitate future planning | Calendar developed | BCC City Events and Venues, Visit Belfast & NITB | Event Stakeholder Group plus internal, external event organisers and BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, Tourism Ireland | 2015 |

| | Objectives | Actions | Target | Lead | Support | *Timescale |
|-----|---|---|--|--|---|-------------------|
| | | 2. To review the physical infrastructure for events in Belfast by undertaking an audit of venues available and capable of hosting events with reference to Sport NI audit | Events venue database completed | BCC Licensing Section | City Events Unit, NITB, DSD, DCAL and internal and external event organisers and venues | 2014 |
| | | 3. To work with event service providers and partners to improve the quality of services at BCC events (e.g. catering, transport, toilets) | To meet with event service providers before and after events and to agree to implement feasible suggestions from event surveys | City Events Unit | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2014 - 2016 |
| | | 4. To identify and build relationships with local, national and international event organisations/ associations to learn about Best Practice and develop new methods and practices for event promotion, development and bidding | Two new relationships established each year. Information disseminated as appropriate internally and externally | City Events Unit | | 2014 - 2016 |
| | | 5. To commission an Events Development Toolkit for use by external event organisers to develop skills in the areas of: a. good practice b. marketing c. networking d. income and sponsorship e. event management and programming f. business planning | Toolkit in place by end of 2014 | City Events Unit | | 2014 |
| 3.5 | To undertake an audit of funding of Council events and in turn review the events the Council stages | 1. To work with key stakeholders to review the Council's events programme | To identify events that the Council would manage and deliver but also highlight possible new finances to be allocated through existing grant schemes | City Events Unit & BCC Parks & Leisure | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event | 2015 |

| | Objectives | Actions | Target | Lead | Support | *Timescale |
|-----|---|---|--|--|---|-------------------|
| | | | | | partners | |
| 3.6 | Establish a re-allocation of Council finances for the overall city events and cultural sector | 1. Identify via stakeholders opportunities to enhance funding for the events and festival sector through existing Council funding | To identify events that the Council would manage and deliver but also highlight possible new finances to be allocated through existing grant schemes | City Events Unit & BCC Parks & Leisure | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 |
| 3.7 | As part of the review of Council finances identify resources to assist with bidding for major ad-hoc one-off events | 1. To work with key stakeholders to garner resources to bid for major one-off events | Identify and attempt to secure one key international event for each year of the action plan | City Events Unit & NITB | BCC City Events and Venues, BCC Tourism, Culture and Arts, Parks & Leisure, NITB, Tourism Ireland, DCAL and external event partners | 2015 |
| | | | | | | |

* The cost of the implementation of the action plan will be consumed within the existing annual events budgets. However, this figure will vary dependant upon Council core funding and the number, size and scale of events.

Appendix II Draft Framework of Criteria for Bidding for Events
for assessing both current Belfast events and events to be bid for

EVENTS AND FESTIVALS MAPPING PROFORMA

| EVENT DETAILS | Sample event |
|---|--------------|
| Event name | |
| Brief event description | |
| Main programme items (e.g. live music/concert; dance; visual art; food for sale or taste; parade; exhibitions etc). | |
| Event type (e.g. open to everyone, ticketed, mixture) | |
| Duration (start/finish, number of days) | |
| Age/history (year first held; number of years running) | |
| Frequency (e.g. annual, monthly etc): | |
| Location/geographic coverage: | |
| Venues (indoor/outdoor, names or total if large number): | |

| AUDIENCE | |
|---|--|
| Audience profile: | |
| Target catchment area (e.g. BCC, Grt Blf, NI etc) | |
| For most recent event: | |
| Number of attendees: | |
| Number of overnight visitors: | |
| Tickets sold? Tours sold? Packages sold? | |
| | |

| MARKETING/PR | |
|---|--|
| Format (e.g. advertising, printed materials, online etc): | |
| Marketing budget/expenditure: | |
| Target media (local, regional, national): | |
| Media or financial sponsor? | |

| FINANCES/ECONOMIC IMPACT | |
|--|--|
| Cost of running event: | |
| Main cost items (e.g. artist/performers, staffing, PR, volunteers costs, light & sound, overhead/administration etc) | |
| Funding (funders and awards): | |
| Sponsorship/amounts: | |
| Income (e.g. ticket sales, merchandise etc) | |
| Economic impact assessment undertaken? | |
| Indirect spend (e.g. food, accommodation etc) | |

| MANAGEMENT | |
|--|--|
| Ownership/led by (e.g. public sector, community, private) | |
| Organisers (staff, committee, volunteers, contracted out etc) | |
| Staffing input (nos - event planning and during events): | |
| Volunteer input (nos - event planning and during events): | |
| Monitoring and evaluation (e.g. visitor satisfaction, evaluation reports, benchmarking etc): | |
| Forward planning/future plans (e.g. strategy): | |
| Issues and challenges (e.g. lack of adequate venues, infrastructure, funding etc): | |

| Draft Framework of Criteria for Event Bidding | |
|---|--|
| Economic Opportunities: | <p>Growth in visitor numbers and associated revenue.</p> <p>Possible incomes from attendees, participants.</p> <p>Repeat business, meaning the potential ability of an event to entice repeat visitation from attendees and/or competitors.</p> |
| Legacy: | <p>Events should clearly demonstrate how its staging will impact on: future development of organisers, participants and or communities and create additional resource/infrastructural developments</p> |
| Publicity Opportunities: | <p>The extent of international publicity and promotion generated for Belfast through media coverage, international distribution of information about the event and about Belfast, advertising, competitions, a welcome message, and pre and post journalists visits. Exposure in Belfast's key markets, in particular ROI, Britain, Mainland Europe, the US.</p> <p>Consideration of the global appeal of the event to all sections of the media community including broadcasters, journalists, and Internet related sites.</p> <p>Editorials and advertising in relevant publications.</p> |
| Promotional Opportunities: | <p>On-site televised coverage at the event.</p> <p>Incorporation into the official event logo, and use of same.</p> <p>Media presence and press involvement at the event.</p> <p>Consumer/trade/concessions stand at the event.</p> <p>Internet opportunities.</p> <p>Corporate entertainment opportunities, on-site hospitality, complimentary tickets opportunities; meaning where an involvement with a particular event provides a "package" of sponsorship opportunities</p> |
| Community/ Destination /Venue Capacity Building: | <p>Community development should be addressed with events assessment. This should pertain to community events (geographically focused in an area in the city) and community input into regional and major events.</p> <p>Where an event in Belfast provides a platform from which other, additional, higher-profile, events in the same theme could be attracted, this would add additional value to the event in question.</p> <p>Where infrastructure investment adds to the capacity of a destination or specific venue to be able to host and accommodate future events – e.g. additional hotel or exhibition facilities substantiated or mooring facilities e.g. Tall Ships 2009</p> |
| Organisational Capacity: | <p>Where the capacity of the agency/organisation/ partnership bidding for or hosting an event is built up, to assist the attraction and management of further events in the future – this may include generation of corporate sponsorship, marketing capability, volunteering etc.</p> |
| Participation/Community links/domestic audience attendance | <p>It is essential that all events should have the capacity to attract local audience. This should be complimented with participatory, where possible, from local people.</p> |
| Volunteering | <p>Number of volunteers utilised / Quality of opportunity i.e. development of individuals skills base training and mentoring opportunities</p> |

Appendix III Draft Event Impact Assessment Framework

Draft Event Impact Assessment Framework

Overview

This document provides details of the additional information that could be gathered by the Council in order to assess the economic and social impacts of Council events (particularly major events) more systematically and comprehensively.

The table below provides details of:

- Who information could be gathered from – Information provider/key stakeholders
- How information could be gathered – Methods of collection
- When information could be gathered – Timing
- What information could be gathered – Types of information to collect

Information would not necessarily have to be collected at each event from each information provider. An annual survey or focus group could take place for groups such as event organisers, businesses, communities or residents.

| Information Provider ²³ | Attendees/ Spectators | Participant/ Competitor | Volunteers | Event Organisers / Sector | Businesses/ Sponsors/ Funders | Communities or Residents |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Methods of Collection | Event Survey | Survey (telephone, paper or internet) or focus group | Survey or focus group | Survey, interviews or focus group | Survey, interviews or focus group | Survey, interviews or focus group |
| Timing | Post event | Post event | Post event | Post event | Post event | Post event |
| Types of Information to Collect | Economic Impact Social Impacts Section 75 profile | Social Impacts | Social Impacts Section 75 profile | Economic Impact + Satisfaction | Economic Impact + Satisfaction | Social Impact |

Gathering Information – Social Impacts

Social impacts can be defined and gathered in several ways. The Events IMPACT Toolkit²⁴ measures the following social impacts of events:

- Satisfaction
- Identity image and place
- Participation
- Skills and volunteering
- Media related impacts

The following sections outline examples of questions that could be asked in order to gather information to assess the social impacts of events (excluding media). The exact questions used will depend on the objectives of the event and may need to be adapted. The questions will also need to be adapted depending on the information provider – not all are appropriate to ask. The questions are formatted for a survey; however they could be adapted to discussion topics for an interview or focus group.

Basic Profile Information (where appropriate e.g. attendees, volunteers)

²³ These will vary depending on the event. The media may be another information provider

²⁴ www.eventimpacts.com

- Gender
- Age
- Place of domicile (e.g. Belfast, NI, International)
- Socio-economic group
- Ethnicity/Disability/other section 75 not captured elsewhere
- Employment status
- Previous attendance at event/similar event

Satisfaction (as per current MBU Surveys)

- Enjoyment of event (and different aspects of) (Rating Scale response)
- Satisfaction with facilities/services (e.g. food, toilets)
- Likelihood to re-attend/attend similar event
- Likelihood to recommend event to others

Identity, Image, Place – Perceptions of Belfast

- This event (or events like this)... (Rating Scale response)
 - improves the image of Belfast as a place to live and work
 - is good for the image of Belfast as a visitor destination
 - positively changes perceptions of Belfast
 - encourages people to come to Belfast
 - provides entertaining and memorable experiences
 - demonstrates that Belfast can host world class events
 - contributes to creating a 'shared future' for Belfast and brings communities together
- More events like this should be held in Belfast (Yes/No)

Identity, Image, Place – Questions for Local Communities/Residents

- Were they aware of the event?
- Did they attend/participate/volunteer?
- Reasons for non-attendance/participation/volunteering
- This event (or events like this)... (Rating Scale response)
 - is enjoyable and entertaining for local people
 - makes me feel more positive about where I live
 - brings local communities together / creates community spirit
 - provides opportunities for the community to become involved (e.g. participating, workshops holding related local event, volunteering)
 - positively benefits the local community (+ supplementary question to describe benefit)
 - negatively affect the local community (e.g. traffic disruption, noise, ASB) (+ supplementary question to describe)
 - improves the image of Belfast as a place to live and work
- More events like this should be held in Belfast (Yes/No)

Participation

General Information to Gather (in addition to profile information)

- Number of participants
- Activity participated in (e.g. workshop, classes, direct participation in event (e.g. marathon runner))

Questions to Ask Participants (in addition to satisfaction and identity, image and place questions)

- This event (or events like this)... (Rating Scale response)
 - has helped to increase my interest in X activity (e.g. festivals, sport, arts)
 - has motivated me to increase my participation in X activity (e.g. festivals, sport, arts)
 - has inspired me to take up X activity or a similar activity
 - has signposted me to ways to take up X activity or a similar activity
- What was the best thing about participating at this event?
- What skills or experience (if any) have you gained from participating?
- How will you apply the skills/experience gained?
- What could be done to improve the participation experience at BCC events?
- How likely are you to participate in another BCC event?
- How likely are to recommend participating in a BCC event to others?
- How would you rate the participation experience overall?

Volunteering

General Information to Gather (in addition to profile information)

- Number of volunteers (applications/accepted)
- Number of volunteering hours provided
- Function/role of volunteers
- Number of volunteering training/support hours provided
- Number of hours spent by staff managing volunteers
- Calculate economic value of volunteers (if possible)

Questions to Ask Volunteers (in addition to identity, image and place questions)

- How did you find out about volunteering at the event?
- Why did you decide to volunteer at the event?
- What previous volunteering experience have you at this/other event?
- How happy were you with the process of applying?
- How happy were you with the training and support provided?
- How well-prepared did you feel to volunteer at the event?
- What was the best thing about volunteering at this event?
- What skills or experience (if any) have you gained from volunteering?
- How will you apply the skills/experience gained?
- What could be done to improve the volunteering experience at BCC events?
- How likely are you to volunteer at another BCC event?
- How likely are to recommend volunteering at a BCC event to others?
- How would you rate the volunteering experience overall?