



Report to: Development Committee

Subject: US Inward Delegation - Feedback

Date: 15 April 2014

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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that as part of the Council's International Relations Framework, North America has been identified as an important destination market to explore business, tourism and education linkages and opportunities for Belfast.
1.2	To this end, the Council hosted two inward delegations in the last quarter as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Brunswick, New Jersey business delegation led by Mayor James Cahill on 15-17 January 2014; and• American Ireland Fund endorsed business mission on 25-28 February 2014.
1.3	Both visits presented an opportunity to promote the best of Belfast's business, cultural and community sectors and to encourage collaboration and further interest in these sectors.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Members are asked to consider the following outcomes and potential outcomes of both inward US visits.
2.2	<p><u>New Brunswick Mission</u> The Belfast Community Gospel Choir is now confirmed to travel to New York and New Jersey to play in prominent venues and to explore potential future collaboration with US partners.</p> <p>The new Belfast Distillery has sold a first whiskey casket to New Brunswick entrepreneur and bar owner, Francis Schott, of the famous Stage Left and Catherine Lombardi Restaurants.</p>

2.3	<p><u>American Ireland Fund Mission</u> The Belfast entrepreneurs who had the opportunity to pitch to the US business leaders greatly welcomed the opportunity and are following up with some of the US individuals. The general feedback was that this was a valuable and well structured opportunity and could have benefited from more time with the US guests including one to one facilitation. They gained useful insights and direction from the US leaders.</p>
2.4	<p><u>Specific outcomes include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential investment for one Belfast company and direct follow up planned for another five companies .One Belfast company secured a sought after link with Belfast City Councils' Parks and Leisure Department with potential for collaboration. • Other companies have entered into regular communications with some of the US business leaders and have been receiving valuable advice on the development of their businesses both locally and in targeting the US market. • One company has secured a contact for potential research with a US company. • The NI Science Park made positive contact with one of the US government representatives to pursue the opportunity for securing graduate placements for NI students on the NI Science Park Connect Programme. KPMG and John O'Donaghue (both US delegates) already host placements and reported very positively on these experiences. • The Belfast cultural and non profit organisations who pitched to the US delegates found the training and experience very developmental. To date they are still in contact and exploring potential follow up for contacts and investment. • BCC received very positive and extensive press coverage during the visit. • QUB's connection to a US Healthcare Royalty Fund. • Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC) are exploring links with the education representative on potential US college links, sharing of learning and best practice and international student exchange. • BMC are also exploring the potential of forming a football academy with US colleges. • BMC are exploring the potential of promoting international peace programmes and summer schools with US colleges. • BMC are exploring further the potential for investment in their planned new performing arts facility at E3.
2.5	<p><u>General</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General feedback from the US delegates on both missions was: • Appreciation for such detailed programmes of visits and the valued mix of economic, culture and community. • Very positive commentary on the development and progress and energy of Belfast and its citizens and in particular the vibrancy and attitude of people they encountered. • The impressive and sophisticated biomedical advances of QUB. • The power of trading advances in the city from companies like New York Stock Exchange. • The international potential of the football academy at BMC. • The world class business shaping our economic offering. • The ground breaking work of the NI Science Park.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The world class Titanic Belfast and overall potential of Titanic Quarter. • Hugely impressive cultural and tourism offering of the city. • The 'blunt' tool the city has used through education to entice direct investment (University of Ulster). • Potential to link Martin Lynch with a prominent Broadway producer to stage 'Chronicles of Long Kesh'.
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3	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
3.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations considerations attached to this report.

4	Recommendations
4.1	It is recommended that Members note the content of this report and the success of the 2 inward US missions.

5	Decision Tracking
<p>Timeline: April 2014 Reporting Officer: John McGrillen</p>	