



Report to: Development Committee

Subject: New York–New Belfast Conference

Date: 15 April 2014

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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The fifth annual New York-New Belfast conference takes place in New York City on 29 & 30 May 2014. The conference focuses on building bridges of mutual benefit between the two cities. The event is hosted by Aisling Events and the Irish Echo and takes place in Fordham University.
1.2	Members will be aware that on 18 March 2014, they were informed that the Lord Mayor is undertaking a business mission to New York City on 28 & 29 May 2014, to coincide with the annual New York–New Belfast conference. This will be undertaken in partnership with the NI Chamber of Commerce and 10 companies have now committed to attend at their own cost. David Gavaghan (Chief Executive, Titanic Quarter Limited) and Maurice Kinhead (Chief Executive, East Belfast Partnership) have also confirmed their intention to attend.
1.3	The companies will be hosted by the New York Stock Exchange and NI company, A&L Goodbody, who have recently opened a New York office. The companies will undertake private meetings with assistance from Invest NI and will also meet and network with the business leaders who recently participated in the American Ireland Fund endorsed visit to Belfast in February 2014.
1.4	Members will recall that they approved the participation of an Officer to support the business mission before and during the New York City visit and provide feedback to Council after the event.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Members will be aware of the annual New York-New Belfast conference that has taken place in New York over the last four years. These events attract delegates from both cities and the programme themes generally focus on promoting mutual linkages between both cities to support economic, social and cultural development.

2.2	Each year BCC agrees to the participation of two Members at the New York-New Belfast conference. It is therefore recommended that the Committee agrees to the participation of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development or their nominees.
2.3	<p>BCC has an opportunity to have an enhanced role at the New York-New Belfast conference this year, under the international relations framework; Belfast City Council could provide a showcase reception to promote the city as a trade destination at Fordham University on 29 May 2014. Such a reception would be attended by the conference delegates confirmed speakers for the event including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Connorton • New York State Comptroller, Thomas P Di Napoli • New York Mayor, Bill De Blasio • East Belfast resident artist Marcus Robinson, • New York City controller, Scott Stringer • Northern Ireland Minister for Justice, David Ford • US Assembly Representative, Mike Cusick • Loretta Brennan Glucksman, former president American Ireland Fund • Key business leaders
2.4	Members should note that the Belfast Community Gospel Choir will perform at the conference; there will be an opportunity to promote them at the city council reception.
2.5	It is anticipated that this will be an opportunity to promote Belfast as a place to invest and to partnership with on a trade, education and business tourism basis.
2.6	The opportunity aligns fully with the Councils' International Relations Framework within which North America and particularly New York has been identified as a destination market which could deliver extensive economic benefits for Belfast.
2.7	It is anticipated that a reception would not cost more than £5,000 attracting up to 150 international delegates and influencers.
2.8	The total anticipated cost of hosting a conference opening reception to showcase Belfast at Fordham University on 29 May will not exceed £5,000. The travel, accommodation and subsistence cost for two Committee Members will not exceed £2,500 bringing to a total resource cost of £7,500.

3	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
3.1	There are no relevant equality and good relations implications attached to this report.

4	Recommendations
4.1	<p>Members are asked to authorise participation in the event by the Chair of the Development Committee (or nominee) and Deputy Chair (or nominee).</p> <p>Approve a budget of up to £7,500 to cover participation of two representatives at the event, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Development Committee or their nominees as well as hosting a Belfast showcase reception on 29 May 2014 at Fordham University.</p>

5	Decision Tracking
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Laura Leonard, European Manager to report on implementation of Committee decision by August 2014.
