



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Belfast Homecoming – One City Conference
Date:	19 August 2014
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that one of the key commitments of the Councils' Investment Programme 2012-2015 is that the Council will work with city partners to promote Belfast proactively on the international stage to attract trade and investment, increase visitor and student numbers and build the networks necessary to support growth.
1.2	As part of the International Relations Framework, BCC has entered into three cooperation agreements to work with the cities of Boston, Shenyang and Dublin on the targeted areas of trade, education and tourism/leisure.
1.3	BCC has received a request to support the Belfast Homecoming – One City Conference on 25-26 September 2014. This conference brings together key stakeholders from a range of sectors from two of our new formal partner cities outlined above, namely Dublin and Boston.
1.4	The conference programme involves a number of sessions and initiatives which complement the Councils' economic development and regeneration objectives and align to the objectives of the Councils' International Relations Framework and associated city agreements.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The Mayor of Boston, Martin Walsh, will be a key note speaker at the Homecoming event and will take the opportunity to engage with BCC's Lord Mayor and officials to explore potential actions for mutual benefit for both cities.
2.2	Members will be aware that the Lord Mayor will make a return visit to Boston during the EU-USA eHealth Conference in October 2014. During this visit, the Mayors will meet again to promote the Sister City Partnership between Belfast and Boston.

2.3	During the Homecoming – One City Conference, Mayor Walsh and the Lord Mayor of Belfast will share a speaking platform to outline the potential benefits of this Sister City Agreement and inform other Belfast stakeholders of this recently signed collaboration.
2.4	There will be other panels involving the Chair of the Development Committee and a panel specifically to discuss and promote the Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor Agreement.
2.5	Members will be aware that a formal cooperation between both cities and stakeholders along the corridor was explored during an event led by the former Lord Mayor of Belfast, Cllr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir and the former Mayor of Dublin, Cllr Oisín Quinn on 28 March 2014. Subsequently, both cities signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for cooperation.
2.6	The conference session will involve speakers from Dublin and Belfast councils and will pick up on the range of ideas for cooperation generated at the inaugural corridor event on 28 March 2014.
2.7	A further opportunity for BCC to promote the priorities of the Councils' Investment Programme is the main plenary planned event in Titanic Belfast on the recent Berridge report on Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment.
2.8	An additional opportunity for Belfast to feature its investment work is to showcase the £30m Belfast Waterfront Hall Conference and Exhibition development and to appeal to the NI diaspora to promote the facility for new business and leisure conferences.
2.9	A full outline of the conference programme for the Belfast Homecoming – One City Conference is attached as Appendix 1 of this report.
2.10	Sponsors secured to date for the conference include, Ulster Bank, Titanic Quarter Ltd., and United Airlines.
2.11	BCC has been asked to co-sponsor the event given the strong promotion of the Councils' investment priorities and its strong leadership for the city.
2.12	Members are asked to provide a financial contribution of £4,500.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The cost of sponsoring the Homecoming – One city Conference will not exceed £4,500.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that Members agree to support the Homecoming – One City

	Conference on 25-26 September 2014, through participation in the various panels outlined above, and provide a financial contribution of £4,500 from within the International Relations budget.
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6	Decision Tracking
Timeline: September 2014	Reporting Officer: John McGrillen

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Belfast Homecoming – One City Conference programme.	