



<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	City Marketing Activity
<b>Date:</b>	21 October 2014
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development, ext 3427

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members will be aware that in the lead up to the Christmas period in 2012 and 2013, the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce approached the Council for emergency funding to support a promotional campaign to overcome negative perceptions of the city which had built up around Belfast on the Move implementation and protests the following year.
1.2	In November 2013, Members asked that there would be no repeat of last minute requests and that funding for such initiatives be adequately planned for. As a result a budget of £70k has been allocated to support this activity within this year's Development department budgets.
1.3	Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce (BCTC) is currently working on a city marketing campaign for the Christmas period, in conjunction with Visit Belfast, Castlecourt and Victoria Square.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	While footfall and spend figures have improved slightly in Belfast over the past year, the economic climate is still relatively precarious. Retailers, the hospitality trade and attractions are keen to ensure that there is active promotion of the city as a key retail, hospitality and visitor destination, given the competition which will come from other destinations in the crucial Christmas period.
2.2	The proposed Christmas campaign – while still under development – is likely to include a range of promotional activities such as online promotion, television advertising, partnerships with Translink and other carriers and promotional events at key locations. The principal aim will be to maximise footfall and consumer spend in the key trading period in the run-up to Christmas.
2.3	In addition to promoting the shopping offer in the city, there will be a focus on encouraging people to stay longer – availing of Belfast's vibrant hospitality offer

	and visitor attractions, and increasing the spend in the city. The campaign will focus not only on the city centre but will also include images and information on other parts of the city. In this regard, it will support the locally-based action plans being developed by trader groups across the city – most of which include a series of Christmas events and activities.
2.4	The four partners – namely BCTC, Castlecourt, Victoria Square and Visit Belfast – have already allocated a total of £130,000 towards the campaign. This along with a proposed Council allocation of £70k would allow for a campaign totalling £200k.
2.5	Members are reminded that, when previous requests for marketing support of this nature have been presented to the committee, there has been concern that activities will be piecemeal and that, because of the lateness of the request, the expenditure will have limited impact. Given that there has already been some development work undertaken on this campaign – and that there is significant commitment from the private sector partners – it is proposed that this represents a more consolidated approach from city partners that will have a greater opportunity of meeting its objectives in terms of enhanced visitor numbers and additional spend.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	It is anticipated that the full campaign will cost £200,000. £130,000 has already been secured from private sector partners. £70,000 has been allocated within Departmental budgets to support the campaign.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	No specific equality and good relations considerations.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	It is recommended that Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note the proposed city marketing campaign for the pre-Christmas period</li> <li>- Agree to match funding of £70,000 from council towards the campaign.</li> </ul>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Timeline: February 2015	Reporting Officer: Lisa Toland

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
BCTC – Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce	