



Subject:	Friendship Four Ice Hockey Tournament - request for support
Date:	13 April 2016
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development, ext 3470
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Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>To seek Members' support for a request to financially support the second National Collegiate Athletic Association of the USA (NCAA) Festival of Ice Tournament.</p> <p>The City Growth and Regeneration Committee is asked to consider the request for a £50,000 financial contribution to host the festival over the 2016 Thanksgiving weekend (25-27 November) and for agreement in principle to support the tournament for a further two years subject to budget approval. This is the same amount that the Council contributed in 2015.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree to commit £50,000 towards sponsorship of the above event.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members will be aware of the successful NCAA Friendship Four Festival of Ice Hockey Tournament held in Belfast at the SSE Arena from 25-28 November 2015. This was complemented by a month long STEM Conference in the W5 complex in Belfast which attracted 2,776 participants.</p>

3.2	BCC contributed £40,000 towards the cost of the tournament, as well as a civic welcome dinner costing £10,000.
3.3	The four universities which came to Belfast in 2015 were the University of Massachusetts (UMass Lowell), Northeastern University, Brown and Colgate. This was the first time that a collegiate hockey competitive tournament was played outside of the USA, and attracted 600 Bostonians who travelled to Belfast for a 4 night stay. The tournament was the first tangible output of the Belfast Boston Sister City Agreement, and significantly strengthened the 2014 agreement. The intention is to host the tournament annually in Belfast, and on 08 February 2016 four universities were confirmed and announced to compete in this year's tournament. These are the University of Massachusetts, St Lawrence University, Quinnipiac and the University of Vermont. Proposed universities for subsequent years include Boston College, Boston University, Dartmouth and Union.
3.4	There is also potential to build on the momentum and develop Friendship Four beyond ice hockey. This may result in a wider Festival of Sport through the inclusion of a sequential basketball competition also under the umbrella of the Sister City partnership.
3.5	<p><u>2015 Outputs</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that the 2015 Friendship Four was successfully telecast in North America. TSN, which is the biggest sports channel in Canada with 158,000 subscribed viewers in Western Canada and airs coast-to-coast, Time Warner Sports (broadcasting in NYC) and NESN (New England Sports Network) broadcast the tournament, reaching 4.2 million homes, and have all expressed their intent to broadcast further in 2016.</p>
3.6	The 2015 Friendship Four featured in both of Boston's major newspapers The Herald and The Globe, with daily readership of 96,500 and 232,432 respectively.
3.7	Direct outputs for the city of Belfast with respect to the 2015 festival are outlined as Appendix 1 of this report.
3.8	Since the first Friendship Four tournament BCC has undertaken a further visit to Boston to develop academic, business and tourism links, and will host an incoming business and political delegation during the sister Cities summit from 19-21 April 2016.

3.9	<p><u>Friendship Four 2016</u></p> <p>BCC has now received a 3 year business plan to host the Friendship Four annually to 2018, along with a city STEM Conference. Should Council support the event, a detailed legal agreement with agreed outputs will be put in place. The Odyssey Trust has approached all previous sponsors (including public and private both in NI and the USA) and is confident of success in securing funding. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has already pledged its support until 2018.</p>
3.10	<p>Members are asked to consider a financial contribution for £50,000 towards the Friendship Four Festival in 2016 and to agree support in principle for successive years, up to and including 2018, subject to funding availability and subject to ongoing alignment with Council objectives.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The total cost of running the Tournament is £280,000. In 2015 BCC contributed £40,000 along with providing a welcome civic dinner in City Hall. Other funding partners included Department of Culture, Arts and Learning (£40,000), Department for Education and Learning (£40,000) and Tourism NI (£40,000), with the remainder raised through US fundraising, including the State Department and the Mayor of Boston's office, along with local ticket sales and private sector sponsors.</p>
3.12	<p>Members are asked to agree support of £50,000 towards the Friendship Four Tournament in 2016, as well as commitment in principle to support the tournament for a further two years at reduced amounts, subject to committee approval and budget availability. Other funders for 2016 have been approached as follows –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sport NI - £40,000 – Department for Education and Learning - £40,000 – Tourism NI - £40,000 – Sponsorship - £75,000 – Merchandise - £3,000 – Ticket Sales - £55,000
3.13	<p>BCC's contribution of £50,000 will cover the cost of a civic welcome dinner (£10,000) as well as covering the cost of provision of game attendance, including transport, for 12,000 young people over the weekend.</p>

3.14	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> There are no equality or good relations implications attached to this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	Appendix 1 - Friendship Four 2015 Outputs