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| Subject: | Belfast Chamber of Trade & Commerce – Belfast Manifesto |
| Date: | 14 September 2016 |
| Reporting Officer: | Nuala Gallagher – Director of City Centre Development |
| Contact Officer: | Michael McKenna – Urban Development Officer |

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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"/> |

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| 1.0 | Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues |
| 1.1 | The purpose of this report is to bring to Members’ attention the Belfast Manifesto recently published by the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce. The Belfast Manifesto sets out the aspirations of the business community on how to improve the economy of Belfast and outlines the Chamber’s views for the forthcoming Programme for Government. The key points from the manifesto executive summary are outlined in the main body of this report. The executive summary is included in Appendix 1. The full manifesto document, which provides further detail on various city interventions, can be viewed using this link: http://www.belfastchamber.com/news-story/757/belfast-chamber-launches---belfast-first---manifesto |
| 1.2 | Council will be seeking to work together with the Chamber and the city’s businesses community to deliver a successful business and retail sector in Belfast. We will also support the Chamber in developing further key city and economic messages and programmes. As part of Council’s ongoing approach to supporting businesses in the city, particularly retail, we have commissioned Javelin group, retail experts owned by Accenture to update the retail study undertaken in 2015. This work considers the ongoing challenges faced by retail in the city centre and looks at the potential impacts of future city centre retail development, job creation and economic uplift as well as the potential risks in job losses and growth of large scale retail development taking place elsewhere. Committee will be updated on this work in |

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| | due course. |
| 2.0 | Recommendations |
| 2.1 | <p>The Committee is asked to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The contents of the Belfast Chamber of Trade & Commerce Belfast Manifesto and note the ongoing retail analysis undertaken by Javelin. - In terms of the rates issues which they have raised, this will be incorporated in our discussions on the rates review. - More detailed conversations are also required with the chamber on rating issues. - In terms of service delivery, the council will establish levels taking into consideration the new BID and its priorities. |
| 3.0 | Main report |
| 3.1 | <p>The Chamber's Belfast Manifesto is strongly supportive of Belfast's regional role as the capital city and highlights that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 28% of all jobs in Northern Ireland are located in the city. • The city is the main centre of business in Northern Ireland with a primary catchment population of 1.8 million. This includes all of Northern Ireland as well as extending into parts of the Republic of Ireland. • 7.1 million high-spending visitors to the city each year, demonstrating the Lonely Planet's description of Belfast being a 'city on the rise'. |
| 3.2 | <p>In line with Council's City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy the Manifesto makes the important point that promotion of Belfast is not in conflict with the economic prosperity and vitality of the rest of Northern Ireland.</p> |
| 3.3 | <p>The Manifesto has a number of requests which it breaks down into a number of categories, some of the key points are outlined below:</p> <p><i>Working Together</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An overarching Belfast Strategy to be located within the Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). - b. An overarching strategic framework for town centre regeneration with improved cross-departmental co-operation or alternative governance arrangements. |
| 3.4 | <i>Planning for a Sustainable Future</i> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The urgent adoption of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5), which are critical to the protection of town and city centres. - In line with draft PPS5, consideration of a test to proposed out-of-town shopping centres, based primarily on the economic impact on existing retailers. |
| 3.5 | <p><i>Fairer Business rates and Taxes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More consultation on rates with businesses, non-domestic rate payers who in Belfast pay some two thirds of the rates bill. - Consideration of business turnover as part of the rates evaluation process. - Welcome a reduction in Corporation Tax with caveats. |
| 3.6 | <p><i>A Cleaner city for all;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise that the Belfast 'Streets Ahead' project has improved the quality and appearance of our city centre but it is now important these high standards are maintained. - Calling on the Council to increase the level of its cleaning operation in the city. |
| 3.7 | <p><i>Accessibility for all</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCTC call on DRD to prioritise investment which will assist in enhancing Metro bus services through the provision of additional Quality Bus Corridors on arterial routes and bus priority measures within the city centre - Car parking tariffs to encourage short-term parking and where possible the movement of all-day parkers to Public Transport. - Strategic Park and Ride sites on the outskirts of the city similar to Cairnshill would help to deter car users from coming into the city. |
| 3.8 | <p><i>Building a better city centre for all</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast Chamber would advocate that Regional Development, Planning and future Local Council Policy be directed to encourage people to live in our city centre. - Standards of excellence in urban design for the city |
| 3.9 | <p>The Manifesto is broadly supportive of Council's position regarding the status and regional role of the city and our desire to grow and enhance the city is shared by the Chamber. In many places the Manifesto supports council's recent strategies including the draft parking strategy, the city centre regeneration and investment strategy and the high level aims of the Belfast</p> |

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| | Agenda and city growth deal. |
| 3.10 | The Manifesto raises some important points regarding the how businesses and both local and central government work in partnership. The Council looks forward to working on these issues with the chamber with the shared aim of improving Belfast for all. The Full Manifesto document includes recommendations for various wide-ranging changes to city governance and accessibility which the Council will seek to engage with the Chamber on in order support our city business sector. |
| 3.11 | The Council is aware of growing concerns regarding the risks associated with any failure to strengthen the retail market in Belfast. On this basis Council have commissioned Javelin to undertake a retail analysis for the city which Members will be updated on in due course. |
| | <u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> |
| 3.12 | None |
| | <u>Equality & Good Relations Implications</u> |
| 3.13 | None |
| 4.0 | Appendices – Documents Attached |
| 4.1 | Appendix 1: The Belfast Manifesto – Executive Summary |