



Subject:	Belfast Partners Event – update
Date:	8 February 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development

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
1.1	The purpose of this report is to advise Members of an event taking place in London at the end of February 2017 to promote engagement between business contacts in Belfast and London and to recommend attendance at the event by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the upcoming Belfast Partners event in London on 28 February 2017• Approve attendance at the event by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, along with appropriate senior officer representation.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that, at the December meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, an update was provided on a range of lobbying and business development activities that had taken place in London in the previous month. These included the work to secure a City Deal for the City, with a presentation to political representatives in Westminster and other relevant influencers. Members were also alerted to the work of the Belfast-Partners Network in London. This is a newly-established, independently-run business

	<p>networking initiative that seeks to make business linkages between companies and leaders in both Belfast and London.</p>
3.2	<p>The formal launch of this network is planned to take place in London on 28 February 2017. This event will be hosted at the headquarters of the global communications business Thomson Reuters in Canary Wharf. It will be attended by more than 150 interested individuals from both cities and there will be an opportunity for the Council to make a positive pitch about the real estate investment opportunities available in Belfast as well as promoting the opportunities for foreign direct investment, particularly the emerging and growing specialisms such as cyber security, legal services and business and professional services.</p>
3.3	<p>The programme for the launch event is currently being finalised. At present, it is proposed that there will be input from Belfast City Council, profiling positive investment messages about the City as a business destination. There will also be input from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, James Brokenshire MP and there will be a contribution from an existing investor in the City. This is likely to be a company working in the financial and professional services sector. They will focus on the business benefits of a Belfast base and will look at how the City can offer a positive solution for a range of support services for a business working in a global operating environment. Belfast provides a very attractive alternative or complementary location to London and Dublin. This could be a particularly important “sell” for Belfast in the post-Brexit time as it is being reported that a number of financial institutions are considering moving operations out of London and Belfast can provide an alternative proposition.</p>
3.4	<p>Following the formal input, there will be an opportunity for networking with those in attendance. The current RSVP list has more than 200 representatives from companies across a range of sectors including financial services, legal services, investment services, education and training, construction and asset management. The organisers expect that more than 150 will attend on the evening.</p>
3.5	<p>The event will be used as a platform to promote the range of investment opportunities in the City as well as emphasising the importance of Belfast as a cost-competitive destination with a well-educated workforce and a commitment to working together to deliver results. It will act as a launch pad for the MIPIM event which will take place in Cannes, France in mid-March 2017 and will also provide an opportunity to re-engage with some of the City influencers to help progress the City Deals proposition for Belfast.</p> <p>Following the event, a report will be brought back to a future meeting of the City Growth and</p>

3.6	<p>Regeneration Committee to update on the outcomes of the event and to set out opportunities for the way forward for our future engagement with the Belfast Partners network and our wider connections in London.</p> <p><u>Financial and resource implications</u></p> <p>Travel and subsistence costs for the Chair and Deputy Chair to cover attendance at this event will not exceed £1,000. These costs will be met from existing Departmental budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality and good relations implications</u></p> <p>No specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
3.7	
3.8	
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None