



Subject:	Routes Europe Conference 2017 – Post Project Review
Date:	9 August 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Maggie McNally, Strategic Programme Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input 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	The Routes Europe Conference was held on 22 to the 25 April 2017. This report is to provide members with information regarding the success of the event as outlined in the Post Project Review carried out by Invest NI.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the report on the Routes Europe Conference 1st Post Project Review.

3.0	Main report
3.1	In October 2016, Members agreed to commit £100,000 to support the costs of hosting the 2017 Routes Europe Conference at Belfast Waterfront. Routes Europe had indicated the benefits to a city in hosting the event would be in terms of positive PR coverage, potential new airline routes announcements and additional leisure/business tourism visitors. This was based on feedback and measurement of Routes Conferences that have been held in other cities.
3.2	<p>The bid for Belfast involved financial contributions from a range of partners. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast City Council - £107,243 • Invest NI - £433,757, and in addition, they have spent £137,000 securing the Routes Conference for Belfast • Tourism Ireland (TIL) - £50,000 • Tourism NI (TNI) - £246,965 • Visit Belfast - £23,400 • BWUH Ltd - £10,000 • The local airports - approximately £110,000 each. • Dept. of the Economy - £18,000
3.3	In addition to these funding contributions, all partners made additional contributions in-kind in order to ensure the success of the event.
3.4	The main Conference and showcase took place in the Belfast Waterfront while a welcome reception was held in Belfast City Hall and a gala networking event took place in Titanic Belfast. The Lord Mayor, Members and the Chief Executive were in attendance.
3.5	<p><u>Key Deliverables</u></p> <p>The following deliverables were captured during the Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,160 delegates including 114 airlines, 270 airports and 36 tourism authorities • 51 visa applications completed by Invest NI for international delegates coming to the City • 140 delegate tours • 750 attendees at the City Hall Welcome Reception • 1,000 attendees at the Titanic Gala Networking Event • 81 Tweets between INI and Visit Belfast • 697 posts to the Routes App (This was the highest percentage of active and engaged

users for a Routes Europe event.)

- 3,635 Routes App likes
- 101 pieces of press coverage

3.6

Financial Information

The cost of the full project including previous engagements with Durban, Krakow and Chengdu, to secure the Belfast Event, was £1,127,115. The project came in within budget. Economic Benefits achieved to date: £386.06 x 3 nights x 1160 delegates – Total £1,343,488

3.7

In addition to the immediate economic benefits to the City, a further 8 new routes were announced during the event as a direct result of conversations in the lead up to the conference. These included Naples, Madeira, Almeria, Antalya, Crete, Malta, Rhodes and Paphos. The announcement created 50 new jobs.

3.8

Longer term results continue to be measured but the most important factor for both airports is that they are no longer just a business card in an airline meeting hall - they are now known as hosts of a prestigious Routes Europe event. They are reporting that from a lead generation point of view, doors are now much more open than they were before. We expect additional business routes to be announced over the coming months.

3.9

Post Event Delegate Survey

- The post delegate survey had a 25% response rate with a total of 189 respondents. This is on a par with previous years.
- Delegates highly rated the event with a Net Promoter Score* (NPS) of +45 – the highest NPS UBM (the event organiser) has ever received for a Routes Europe event. (**The Net Promoter Score is a customer loyalty metric which provides a clear and easily interpretable Customer Satisfaction score – Scores are ranged from -100 - +100*)
- Both the Welcome Reception and Networking Event were rated as market leading* in the conference and exhibition industry and the Routes Europe team have asked that Belfast be used as an exemplar case study of how to deliver a successful Routes Europe conference.
- The Welcome Reception in City Hall was rated by 82% of attendees as good/excellent

**Market leading classification is only given to attributes that score 80% or higher and the ratings are compared to 300+ shows in 31 countries and 52 locations in the past*

3.10

18 months.

When asked about their likelihood of returning to Belfast for business or leisure:

- 56% said they would return for business (highest percentage received ever for a Routes Europe event).
- 63% said they would return for leisure purposes (average for all past Routes Events was 62%).

3.11

Core event component parts (atmosphere, networking) were rated positively with significant increase in venue and transport services ratings. These were compared against the average in each area of the past 4 routes Europe and Belfast Routes surpassed previous scores in all metrics.

Core Event Component Parts

2017	4-5 (Excellent)	4 year average score for Routes Europe
Event atmosphere/ambiance	88%	78.3%
Transportation services	83%	70%
Location (Belfast and venue Waterfront)	79%	69%

3.12

The results show that the Routes Europe Event 2017 scored higher than the last 4 year average score.

3.13

Those surveyed were asked about their perceptions of the City; 83% said that their perceptions of the City were more positive than before with 52% saying that they saw opportunities for their organisation in the City.

3.14

A video of the Routes Europe event in Belfast was compiled from footage taken across the 3 days. The output is a 2min promotional video which can be viewed at

3.15

<https://youtu.be/QPyYdDbshrE>

UBM are keen to work with Belfast as a destination for other events in their portfolio. They are also working with Invest NI to produce the case study of how Routes Europe should be delivered. Steven Small, Brand Director, Routes has given the following testimonial:

'Working with Team Northern Ireland in the planning and delivery of Routes Europe in Belfast was a pleasure. We experienced a professional and knowledgeable team of people

3.16	<p><i>who went the extra mile for us across all aspects of the event, and this was evident in the fantastic feedback we had from our delegates. Most of them regularly attend high profile international events and they were really impressed by Belfast – the partnership approach really works. We felt warmly welcomed from the minute we stepped off the plane and this spanned from taxi drivers to volunteers, bar staff to The Lord Mayor. I would thoroughly encourage event organisers to put Belfast on their list of destinations as we delivered a fantastic event.'</i></p>
3.17	<p>From the initial analysis this year, Routes Europe has been very successful and has showcased what Belfast and Northern Ireland has to offer. Appended are some of the tweets and posts on Facebook from delegates.</p>
3.18	<p>Members are asked note the report.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>No specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1 – Online feedback samples from delegates