



Subject:	International Relations Update
Date:	13 September 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Laura Leonard, European & International Relations 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"/>

Call-in	
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 the report is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Update Members on the delivery of the International Relations Framework, focusing on activity over the last six months since April 2017Seek approval for the delivery of further activity within the 2017 – 2018 Action Plan until the end of the current financial year.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the range of activities and associated outputs of a range of International Relations actions over the course of the first half of this financial year as well as the plans for the period September 2017 - March 2018Agree to the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Committee (or nominees) at

	<p>the business mission and business networking event in the City of London on 22-23 November 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agree to the attendance of the Chair of Committee (or nominee) and one officer at the 2017 Commonwealth Local Government conference in Malta on 21 – 24 November, 2017, at a cost not to exceed £1,500. – Agree to the attendance of the Lord Mayor and Director of Development (or their nominees) at the launch of the 2018 Friendship Four Tournament in Boston in January 2018, at a cost not to exceed £3,500. – Agree to provide financial support of up to £5,000 towards the annual Chinese New Year event in Belfast.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Members will recall the November 2016 approval of a new International Relations Framework for the period 2016 - 2021.
3.2	The aim of this Framework is to continue to promote Belfast on the international stage with other stakeholders as a place to visit, study, work and do business. The Framework will deliver primarily on the formal relationships already in existence through the Sister City Agreements with Shenyang, Boston and Nashville, the Memorandum of Understanding with Dublin, and developing relationships with London. New areas of opportunity will be considered on their merits and relevance to Belfast.
3.3	Members will be aware that, at the 8 March 2017 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, an update report on International Relations activity for the previous six months was presented and the outline plans for the coming period were set out for endorsement. This report provides an update on the activities and associated outcomes over the six-month period from April to September 2017 and identifies a number of priority actions for the coming six months, until the end of the current financial year. These activities have, in the most part, been led by Belfast City Council working in partnership with stakeholders in government, education, tourism, business, culture and sport.
3.4	<p>The key deliverables for the period April-September 2017 are set out in Appendix 1. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City visit to Shenyang, focusing on educational linkage opportunities. The Lord Mayor was accompanied by representation from Belfast Metropolitan College and both universities and all are currently pursuing opportunities for collaborative research, training and student exchanges

- Hosting of the first ever visit to Belfast by the Nashville Healthcare Council, with plans underway for a wider trade mission from Tennessee State area in the coming year
- Hosting of a multi-sectoral business mission from Boston in June 2017. Some concrete leads are already progressing, including collaborative engagement between the MAC and academics from Harvard University.

3.5

The coming six months will see a number of inward and outward visits as well as ongoing engagement and contacts to follow up on leads from previous visits. The majority of these activities have already been approved by this Committee and the budgetary resources have been set aside within the agreed Departmental budgets. However, there are a number of additional activities that will require the approval of this Committee.

3.6

The outline plans for September 2017-March 2018 include:

Shenyang

- Attendance at the 3rd Annual Shenyang Smart Cities Summit on 21-23 September 2017. This will be an opportunity to showcase the Belfast Smart Cities Roadmap and pipeline projects. It is anticipated that the cities of Belfast and Shenyang will reach agreement during the summit to develop and deliver a collaborative Smart Cities project
- Belfast City Council will seek to host a second inward business mission from the London Chinese Chamber of Commerce with Invest NI in late 2017
- Belfast City Council will support Chinese New Year 2018 in partnership with the Chinese Consulate General and Confucius Institute. The organisers have approached the Council to seek a contribution of £5,000 towards the celebrations. These will be held in Belfast City Hall and will involve a series of performances and local outreach events. The celebrations will take place over the period end of January to mid-February, 2018. Members are asked to consider this request for support, which has not yet been approved by this Committee.

Nashville:

- Nashville has confirmed that the City will lead an annual cross sectoral delegation to Belfast each Autumn. Officers are currently developing a programme for this visit from 2-6 October 2017. The Nashville delegation will consist of more than 12 representatives across a range of sectors including business, academia and legislature. Members of the Committee will be invited to meet the delegation over the course of the visit
- Ongoing support for student exchanges between Belfast schools and their Nashville counterparts, starting again in January 2018
- Visit to Nashville in late September 2017 by a creative industries and music business

delegation, in partnership with the Nashville Entrepreneurship Centre

- Ongoing engagement with the Country Music Awards (CMA) to explore the potential of livestreaming the awards in Belfast or other broadcast opportunities, as well as the potential for some live music events in the city. This may form part of a future cultural celebration programme that will be brought to a future meeting of this Committee for consideration and endorsement.

Boston

- Belfast City Council will hold a Belfast in Boston Week from 16-20 October 2017 showcasing tourism, cyber security, European Capital of Culture and Resilient Cities cooperation. A programme for this visit is currently being finalised in conjunction with the Belfast lead contact in Boston as well as Invest NI. The visit will coincide with a global entrepreneurship event that will be taking place in Boston at the same time and there will be opportunities to profile Belfast-based entrepreneurs
- Belfast City Council will host 25 Boston delegates during the annual International Homecoming from 2-6 October 2017
- Belfast City Council is donating an organ donor arts sculpture to Boston on 3rd December as part of the global cities initiative to celebrate organ donorship
- Ulster University will enter into a collaborative arrangement with Emerson College, Boston on Animation
- Belfast City Council will co-host the 3rd annual Friendship Four Ice Hockey Tournament and Gala dinner in November 2017
- Belfast City Council will co-host the inaugural Basketball Hall of Fame Belfast Invitational Tournament in December 2017. In parallel with the event, the Council will host a business mission from Massachusetts
- The MAC will play host in October 2017 to a Beckett production that has been developed by a Harvard-based academic team
- Boston Visitor Convention Bureau Boston and Visit Belfast will co-operate to promote the Norwegian Airlines Belfast to Providence flight
- The Lord Mayor has been invited to launch the 2018 Friendship Four event in Boston in January 2018. Previous Lord Mayors have also attended this event which is an important element of raising the profile of the event. This visit will also provide an opportunity to start the process of engagement with potential new teams for future events. The Committee is asked to approve the Lord Mayor's attendance at this event, along with one officer at a maximum cost of £3,500. This budget has been set aside within the current Departmental budget.

London

- Belfast City Council to host a visit by the Lord Mayor of the City of London in October 2017. This will provide an opportunity to promote the City as a location for business and professional services investment
- Belfast City Council has sponsored the London-based Belfast Partners network. The network will host a series of events in the course of the next six months to encourage business-based collaborations between companies located in both cities and will collaborate with the Council on a number of these. The events will include a business mission and networking event in London on 22-23 November 2017. Recruitment will close soon for participating businesses and it is likely that 8-10 local companies take part in the mission. In addition to individually-organised programmes, the companies will take part in a networking reception in the City of London on the evening of 23 November. Given the opportunities for networking, business-to-business connections and city promotion, it is recommended that the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee takes part in this visit. The costs will not exceed £1,000 and will be met from within existing Departmental budgets.

Wider Engagement

- Belfast has been nominated as the host city for the 2019 Commonwealth Local Government (CCLG) conference. This event takes place every 2 years and draws attendance from local authorities from across the Commonwealth area. The 2017 event takes place in Malta on 21 – 24 November 2017. As part of the promotion and engagement process associated with positioning Belfast possibly as the 2019 host city, it is proposed that the Chair of Committee (or nominee) and one officer attends the November 2017 event in Malta. The costs associated with attendance will not exceed £1,500.

Financial and Resource Implications

3.7

Costs associated with the above activities have been set aside within the existing Departmental budget.

Equality and Good Relations Implications

3.8

The new International Relations Framework 2016-2021 has been equality screened and approved.

4.0 Appendices – Documents Attached

Appendix 1: International Relations Outputs: April - September 2017.