



Subject:	Creation of the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance
Date:	10 January 2018
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Clare Mullen, Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts 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 or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to advise Members of correspondence received from Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) regarding the creation of the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance. TNI have asked that Belfast City Council becomes a member of that Alliance at a cost of £2,000 per year.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the request for Belfast City Council to become a member of the NI Tourism Alliance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the contribution of £2,000 per annum for an initial period of 3 years.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Members will be aware of the growing importance of the tourism industry to Belfast and Northern Ireland. It is estimated that around 18,000 people are employed in the tourism and hospitality sector. The significant growth in hotel development – with an additional 1000 rooms becoming available in 2018 – will only serve to increase the employment potential of the sector.
3.2	At present, hospitality accounts for around 5.2% of GDP. This is around half of the figure for comparative cities across the UK and this demonstrates the potential for additional development.
3.3	Unlike other industry sectors, tourism and hospitality does not have a strong industry body to represent its interests to government and to provide a focal point for engagement with the sector. Taking account of this, Tourism NI has been working with a number of key representatives from the sector and agreement has been reached to establish the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance.
3.4	The purpose of the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance is to champion the tourism sector and its benefits to the regional economy, make the case for resources to be made available for the development and delivery of tourism growth, including the work of local government, and to advocate for positive policy change in areas such as VAT, Air Passenger Duty and Licencing Legislation.
3.5	A Steering Group established to explore the potential for creating an independent, private sector – led representative body for the tourism industry met in early December 2017. The group was facilitated by Tourism NI and chaired by Ellvena Graham, Chair of NI Chamber of Commerce and Chair of Belfast Waterfront Board.
3.6	<p>The Steering Group agreed that it would be important to have all 11 Local Authorities engaged as members of the Alliance, given local government’s role in delivering major visitors attractions, visitor servicing through Tourist Information Centres, regeneration and development of their local tourism industries. It was also recognised that given the scale of the contribution made by the local government sector that it should be afforded a seat at the Executive of the Alliance.</p> <p>Currently seventeen organisations have agreed to commit to £5,000 per annum in</p>

3.7	<p>membership fees to ensure the Alliance is suitably resourced to fulfil its objectives including Belfast Harbour, George Best Belfast City Airport, Belfast International Airport, British Airways, Aer Lingus, FlyBe, NI Hotels Federation, National Trust, National Museums NI, Titanic Belfast, Visit Belfast, Hospitality Ulster, Translink, Stena Line, ABTA, NI Federation of Passenger Transport and Food NI. Tourism NI will provide £30,000 support and will act as observers on the Alliance.</p>
3.8	<p>The Steering Group has proposed that each of the Councils could contribute £2,000 per annum towards the running costs and all Councils have been approached to provide this support.</p>
3.9	<p>It is considered that the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance will provide a useful vehicle for engagement with the industry. Likewise, it will help increase the profile of the industry to government and, in turn, help shine the spotlight on the economic potential of the sector. This is likely to lead to additional focus and resources being directed to support sector growth. Given the potential of the sector in Belfast, this will have a positive impact on the City.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>No specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The contribution required from Belfast City Council is £2,000 per annum for three years initially and would be provided from existing Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts annual budget.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None.