



Subject:	Covid-19 health and safety adjustments to Cruise Belfast Welcome Hub
Date:	13 January 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism

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 update Members on plans to work in partnership with Tourism NI and Visit Belfast to facilitate necessary health and safety adjustments to the Cruise Belfast Welcome Hub and neighbouring berths at Belfast Harbour in advance of the cruise season which is due to commence in March 2021.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Note the contents of the report and agree that Belfast City Council works in partnership with Tourism NI and Visit Belfast to facilitate necessary Covid-19 health

	and safety upgrades using appropriate contractual mechanisms as advised by Legal Services.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>In 2019, a partnership between Tourism NI, Visit Belfast and Belfast Harbour saw the opening of a dedicated cruise terminal in Belfast. After a record breaking year, Belfast welcomed 146 ship and over 280,000 visitors into the harbour and a global panel (Cruise Critic) named Belfast the best port of call in the UK and Ireland. The purpose built terminal facility can accommodate all vessels currently operating in the UK and Ireland region and the berth has been dredged to accommodate the next generation of ships, designed to carry over 6,000 passengers and crew. The cruise terminal facilities currently include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cruise visitor information centre • Shore excursion coach parking • Dedicated shuttle bus space • Taxi rank • Free Wifi • Destination showcase video wall • Gift shop • Washroom facilities including disabled access WC • Security desks • Seating
3.2	<p>Belfast's visitor economy has been severely challenged by Covid-19 and it is anticipated that many of the challenges that the pandemic has brought to the tourism and hospitality industry may be with us for some time in the future. In order to ensure that Belfast is ready to allow the first cruise ship of the season to dock in the city on 7 March 2021, Tourism NI have agreed to allocate up to £110,000 of capital investment for Belfast City Council to administer to Visit Belfast and Belfast Harbour to allow for specific Covid-19 health and safety adjustments to be made to the terminal and surrounding passenger docking areas. The adjustments will be made in the terminal itself and at the 3 berths in Belfast Harbour where a ship may dock (D1, Stormont Dock and Pollock Dock). Examples of adjustments include but are not limited to protective screens, internal and external directional signage, temperature check stations and hand sanitizing stands. These adjustments will give assurance to visitors that Belfast is a safe place to visit as well as being necessary to reduce the potential spread of the virus.</p>

3.3	<p>Tourism NIs investment of £110,000 inclusive of VAT will be awarded through their annual allocation from the Department for Economy. In order to ensure good corporate governance and continue to support a three-way partnership between Tourism NI, Visit Belfast, and Belfast City Council, it is proposed that an agreement is set up by Belfast City Council facilitate the transfer of funds from Tourism NI to Visit Belfast.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial implications for Council other than an allocation of officer time to facilitate contract management and administration. The timing for administration of the Agreement and processing invoices is challenging but achievable and necessary in the context of facilitating a return to business and recovery for the tourism sector.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The proposed works will need to adhere to required equality implications including access requirements.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	None