

Appendix 2: Belfast City Council – International engagement activity: Delivery Plan 2025-2026

Trade and Investment					
Project/Initiative	Brief Overview	Belfast City Council Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Priority outputs and benefits
New York, New Belfast 2025	Annual event and supporting side programme focused on engaging with key east coast USA economic “champions” and pipeline FDI companies considering investing in Belfast and potential trade opportunities for local companies. Also opportunity to position Belfast’s latest Tourism messaging (Fleadh 2026) and capital assets for investment	EU and International Relations Team (EUIRT)	Event organisers Invest NI US office and Belfast Chamber	June 2025 (<i>now complete</i>)	Investment leads for City assets and trade leads for Belfast businesses Support Invest NI for investment and trade pipeline Promotion of major events
Homecoming 2025	Business conference promoting Belfast to diaspora communities, particularly US-based.	EUIRT	Event organisers	October 2025	Tailored messaging and engagement to focus on capital investment opportunities. Showcase will also draw on cultural engagement, including profiling Fleadh Cheoil
US Sister City collaboration engagement	Development work to explore re-engagement with Boston, using same successful “Team Belfast” model used for Nashville mission. Boston focus will also be Life and Health Sciences including access to innovation partnerships/VCs	EUIRT; Enterprise and Business Growth Team	ICB; universities; Catalyst; individual businesses	Indicative working date – Q4 2025/6 (subject to partner agreement)	Partnerships & access to finance / trade for Belfast businesses, with focus on L&HS Promotion of Belfast as a study and tourism destination

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	Nashville inward trade mission: engagement with VCs and sector bodies to develop and delivery inward (to NI) business mission, focusing on life and health sciences	EUIRT, working with EBG Team	Invest NI; Global Health Connector; HIRANI	June 2026 (indicative date). Preparatory work to commence September 2025	Exploring FDI opportunities in key growth sectors; expanding business base in Belfast for key growth sectors
Developing new EU business connections	Undertaking scoping work with NI Executive Office in Brussels and Invest NI to explore opportunities for additional engagement in EU/Brussels-based activities, with a focus on increasing business engagement in new markets	EUIRT; EBG	NI Executive Office in Brussels, Invest NI	Initial exploratory work completed – November 2025. Action plan agreed and implementation from January 2026	New market engagement opportunities for local businesses
Belfast City and Region Place Partnership	Joint public/private sector-led initiative focused on place positioning to attract investment and deliver on inclusive growth. Key events include MIPIM (France, March each year) and UK ReiiF (Leeds, May each year). Other special/one-off events may also be involved, in line with opportunities. The Partnership also produces resources such as a website and investment prospectus. Will also undertake targeted work to identify and engage with new international investment opportunities, with a focus on supporting priority city investments e.g. new housing	City Regeneration and Development team	Other BRCD councils, Belfast Harbour, Universities, Invest NI, developers, construction companies, legal and financial services	Annual programme of work, with attendance at a number of flagship events	Leads generated in support of investment attracted and developments supported

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Develop and maintain updated Belfast's city proposition messaging and new products	Review and update of existing collateral to focus on key investment messaging for specific target markets – complement innovation proposition (below) and Invest NI collateral	Internal BCC teams (EUIR; Comms; Research; ED; CRD)	Invest NI; universities and colleges; City Deal project leads	Review current: Q2 2025; revised products: Q4	High quality products identifying unique investment opportunities; shared messaging among partner organisations
Inward Delegations: facilitate requests for presentations on Belfast's ED proposition	Facilitating inward visits, and using opportunity to showcase opportunities for investment, trade collaboration and good practice across a range of ED areas (note: will put in place "qualification" process to identify projects with potential for positive impact)	EUIRT (coordinate); input from relevant council and other partner leads	Range of city partners – depending on area of priority	Ongoing	Follow up engagement leading to more specific plans for investment /trade or collaboration (e.g. meeting with President of Babson College)
Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor	Work in collaboration with 8 councils along the corridor to take forward collaborative projects across several areas including sector development; research and innovation; skills development	Enterprise and Business Growth team	EUIR Team; other DBEC council partners; universities; NI/ RoI government depts	Ongoing work programme agreed with partner councils	Funded project activity in priority areas (circular economy; sector development; skills development). Note: decision on skills development project due October 2025

Innovation and Knowledge Exchange					
Project/Initiative	Brief Overview	Belfast City Council Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Priority outputs and benefits
Belfast Innovation value proposition	Developing a shared investable value proposition for the Belfast innovation ecosystem – including the City Deal funded investments	City Innovation Office	Innovation City Belfast partners	Draft proposition to be tested at Smart Cities World Congress (November 25)	Greater coherence and clarity of messaging to priority market segments
Bloomberg Philanthropies 2025 Mayors Challenge	A two phase, 12-month programme with 50 other cities aimed at delivering urban innovation solutions including officers and Innovation Commissioner visit to Columbia	City Innovation Office	Innovation City Belfast and challenge partners	First workshop planned for late Spring 2025	Collaborative proposals for solving urban innovation challenges
Smart City World Congress (Barcelona)	Promotion of city messaging, focusing on opportunities for partnership, investment, research and trade in relation to digital innovation	Innovation City Belfast	ICB Partners	Q3	Leads in relation to partnerships, investment, research & funding opportunities
Upsurge Initiative	EU Funded climate demonstrator project linking Belfast to Maribor, Budapest, Breda, Katowice including officer visits to each partner city	Climate Team	CNS Team; Neighbourhood Services; QUB; EU Partners; Community orgs	Netherland visit – October 2025	Inform and evidence viability of nature-based solutions for sustainable food production
Support education partners' international activity (focus on sister city links)	Use civic linkages to enhance international collaborations in innovation, research and attraction of international talent	EUIRT, City Innovation, ICB	Third level education partners	Ongoing	Education partners secure research income; attract international students

City Positioning, Tourism Promotion and Cultural Development					
Project/Initiative	Brief Overview	Belfast City Council Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Priority outputs and benefits
Supporting strategic tourism stakeholders in attracting and promoting major tourism and cultural events	Collaborating with Visit Belfast, Tourism Ireland and Tourism NI to drive sectoral growth and positioning Belfast as a host city for major events and international exhibitions – focus on Fleadh Cheoil for coming year	Tourism and Fleadh teams	Visit Belfast Tourism Ireland Tourism NI	Engagement plan finalised – October 2025; marketing and comms campaign implementation starts Jan 2026	International positioning and profiling opportunities; increasing visitor numbers
Friendship Four – Men and Women’s Tournaments	US College Ice Hockey Tournaments linked to Boston Sister City; associated STEM Festival and promotion of city via US TV airtime	EUIRU Tourism team	Odyssey Trust NI Connections DfC Tourism NI	Q3	Economic impact on city – bed nights, Arena venue, US and global press coverage value, socially and impact on schools and community groups making US ice hockey links for future cooperation
Your Roots Are Showing	Folk music conference and trade fair which attracts over 100 artists – scheduled for January 2026	Culture Team	Visit Belfast ICC Belfast	January 2026	Improved city positioning (focusing on music/culture)
Celebrate Chinese New Year	Participation in city partner events to mark New Lunar year	Civic Offices (esp. Lord Mayor) EUIRT	Good Relations Team; Chinese Welfare Association; Chinese Chamber; Chinese Consulate, Confucius	Q4	Enhances civic relations with Chinese players locally and internationally at civic, business and community level

UNESCO City of Culture	Ongoing collaborative exchanges and investment in local music sector – as one of 59 international cities of culture (music). International activities include October 2025 visit to South Korea	Culture Team	Cultural sector	Ongoing programme of activity (approved annually via CGR)	Support development of local music sector; profile sector on international stage; present opportunities for international engagement by local artists
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In addition to above workstreams, Council teams currently participate in strategic thematic networks aligned to the above themes including:

Council for Global City CIOs	Information and opportunity exchange between innovation cities across the world including virtual speaking opportunity at UN Global Health Connector event for Belfast Innovation Commissioner and attendance and participation at the Connector Innovation Summit in Las Vegas
European & UK Learning Cities Networks	Exchanging best practice and developing initiatives to support community learning including officer engagement in Learning Cities network events in Paris and Shenyang, promoting Belfast's best practice programmes., including the role of lifelong learning in aging societies. (fully paid by network)
UNESCO City of Music	Active participation in UNESCO cultural networks with reciprocal benefits between the cities including but not limited to partnerships with UCoM cities Kansas City (US) Hannover (Germany) Daegu (South Korea), Conde (Brazil), Ghent (Belgium) and Bologna (Italy). This year an officer will travel to each partner city (fully paid by network)
IETM	International cultural network representing over 500 member organisations and individual professionals working in the contemporary performing arts worldwide. Belfast City Council and several of its cultural partners locally are members of the network