



<b>Subject:</b>	Attendance at Welcoming Interactive Conference 26 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
<b>Date:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	David Sales, Director, City & Neighbourhood Services Department
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	Members are asked to note the Council’s intention to send an officer to attend the Welcoming Interactive Conference from 26 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2023 in San Jose, California which we have been invited to attend as part of the Inclusive Cities Project.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Note that, as the lead operational officer for the Inclusive Cities project within BCC, Leish Dolan will be attending the Welcoming America Interactive Conference in San Jose, California from 26<sup>th</sup> April – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023 as per invitation from Inclusive Cities.</li><li>• Note that the only cost to Council would be return travel from Belfast to Dublin, any visa costs and associated subsistence costs on the 2 days of travel.</li></ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p>The Inclusive Cities project is a knowledge exchange initiative supporting UK cities and their local partners to achieve a change in their approach towards the inclusion of newcomers in the city. Council had been invited by the Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity at the University of Oxford to participate in the Inclusive Cities project, which is a three year initiative.</p>
3.2	<p>Council agreed in November 2019 that BCC could participate in the project. A requirement of joining was to nominate two people who would engage in the project on behalf of the city: a senior official or elected representative that would head up the city’s taskforce and an operational lead who has capacity to develop and deliver the action plan and manage the taskforce and is able to drive forward progress day-to-day. Council had nominated Councillor John Kyle as Chair of SCP as the Lead member and Leish Dolan as the Lead Operational Officer.</p>
3.3	<p>Council also agreed to BCC involvement in two 5-day convenings as well as a European Exchange. However, due to the pandemic, there has only been one UK convention held in person which the Good Relations Officer attended and there have been no European Exchanges as yet. However, there have also been online conferences and meetings which have yielded beneficial information around civic engagement initiatives with refugees and asylum seekers as well as minority ethnic communities.</p>
3.4	<p>The aims of the project closely align with the current Strategic Intent within the Belfast Agenda Refresh relating to good relations and the commitment of Council and other partners to progress the findings of the recently published “Inequalities Experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller People living in Belfast. The latter was commissioned in partnership with the BHSCT and the PHA.</p>
3.5	<p>As part of the Inclusive Cities Project, an invite has been extended to Council to a conference presented by Welcoming America in San Jose, California from 26<sup>th</sup> April – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Welcoming Interactive is an annual conference that highlights successful practices and inspiring stories about immigrant inclusion, programmes, policies, and partnerships. From economic development to civic engagement, government leadership, and beyond, the conference features presentations and interactive sessions from a diverse range of inclusion experts. Inclusive Cities sees this as a huge opportunity to share good practices and build new partnerships.</p>
3.6	<p>Topics being covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race and Belonging</li> <li>• Building Welcoming Schools</li> </ul>

3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigrant Civic Leadership</li> <li>• Breaking Down Barriers (Policing)</li> <li>• Building Strategies for Inclusion</li> <li>• Equitable Access</li> <li>• Physical Spaces of Welcome</li> <li>• Elevating the Voices of People with Lived Experience</li> <li>• Study of Newcomer Inclusion</li> </ul> <p>Given the strategic importance of the issue of inclusion, the fact that Council have also signed up to be a City of Sanctuary and wish to see Belfast as a welcoming safe and inclusive city, alongside the upward trend in reporting of racist hate crime within the City, this will be an opportunity for the Good Relations Officer, as a lead officer in this work, to feed the learning into the Council’s own Race Equality Plan, the Belfast Agenda on Good Relations, the TEO Dispersal Fund for Asylum Seekers, PEACE PLUS Local Action Plan, the District Council GR Plan and as facilitator of the Migrant Forum for Belfast to share good practice with members of that Forum and the Shared City Partnership.</p>
3.8	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>Inclusive Cities has advised that they are able to fund the participation of one person who has been substantially involved with the programme per city. This will cover conference registration, accommodation and board from 25<sup>th</sup> April – 29<sup>th</sup> April, return flights to San Francisco arriving 25<sup>th</sup> April and leaving on 29<sup>th</sup> April and ground transport. This would have an approximate cost of £2,000. They will not cover travel/health insurance, visas or taxis.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>Attendance at the conference will provide opportunities to promote greater equality and good relations outcomes.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Appendices</b></p>
	<p>Further information on the conference can be found at <a href="#">Welcoming Interactive in San Jose, April 26-28</a></p>