

Appendix 1 - International Relations Delivery Plan: September 2026-March 2027 key activities

Trade and Investment						
Project/Initiative	Brief Overview	Council Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Priority Outputs and Benefits	Opportunities for Member Engagement
Nashville Life and Health Sciences business mission	Inbound trade mission involving Nashville/Tennessee businesses in life and health sciences, exploring trade and FDI opportunities	EUIRT	Invest NI; Global Health Connector; HIRANI	5-7 October 2026	Exploring FDI opportunities in key med tech sector; expanding business base in Belfast for key growth sectors	LM will host full delegation in parlour. Opportunity for all CGR members to meet delegation on 6 October
Belfast International Homecoming 2026	Business conference promoting Belfast to diaspora communities, particularly US based	EUIRT	Event organisers	7-9 October 2026	Tailored messaging and engagement to focus on capital investment. Delegation includes Massachusetts Commissioner, NY Red Hook Port Terminals and NY Construction Co Association, seeking collaborations with Belfast	LM plays key role across programme. Opportunity for Chair/Deputy/ nominees to attend event and /or dinner
EU-based trade connections	Exploratory work with NI Executive Office in Brussels and Invest NI to scope opportunities for additional engagement in EU/Brussels-based activities, with a focus on increasing business engagement in new markets	EBG - linked to LEP opportunities in exploring new business markets	NI Executive Office Brussels; other Brussels-based partners	Link to all party delegation to Brussels for EU Week of Regions and Cities, 12-14 October 2026	Potential new market development opportunities for Belfast businesses - increased trade	All party delegation confirmed to attend
Nashville civic mission	Sister City civic, cultural and education focused mission	EUIRT	US stakeholder group partners	18-22 October 2026	Bringing new sectoral contacts to explore new collaborations with Belfast stakeholders in culture, music, tourism, academia, civic learning.	Opportunity for all CGR members to meet delegation
Belfast City and Region Place Partnership	Continuation of rolling plan of work, focusing on collaborative presence at key events including MIPIM and UK REiF. Also development of promotional collateral focusing on capital development opportunities	City Regeneration and Development Team	Belfast City and Region Place Partnership - range of public and private partners	Rolling programme of work focused on key showcase events	Leads generated in support of investment attracted and developments supported	Elected member engagement as part of key showcase events
Messaging and comms	Develop and maintain updated Belfast's city proposition messaging and new products	Ongoing work to review and revamp investment info and develop new materials. Focus on both capital and business/innovation narratives as part of the "pitch"	Invest NI; universities; BMC; ICB; key sector bodies	Review current: Q2 2026 ; produce revised products: Q4	More coherent and professional narrative; improved focus on key markets; sectors; investment leads to maximise RoI	All materials to be made available to members
Inward delegations	Facilitating requests for presentations on Belfast's Economic and Innovation propositions. Note: we are developing a "qualification" process to identify projects with potential for positive impact – too many requests with no return	EUIR; EBG, City Innovation and ICB teams	Dependent on area of interest	Ongoing - new triage process under trial and reviewing requests on case-by-case basis	Requests for support tested against international priorities and corporate/city priorities	Member engagement on case-by-case basis, as appropriate
US business mission - Boston and Chicago	Five day programme conducted in conjunction with partner organisations to promote business, tourism and cultural opportunities with both cities and wider east coast USA	EUIRT, ICB, TCHA	Partners tbc but likely to include TIL, Invest NI, NI Bureau, CDHT, GHC, Catalyst	early Spring 2027 (dates to be finalised)	Promoting trade and investment opportunities in key city growth sectors; promoting cultural and tourism opportunities in city, with focus on Fleadh and major events and cultural activities	LM to lead delegation (or CGR Chair if not possible)

Innovation and Knowledge Exchange

Project/Initiative	Brief Overview	Council Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Priority Outputs and Benefits	Opportunities for Member Engagement
EU Week of Regions and Cities	Participation in largest programme of urban specific workshops, seminars and briefings with additional side programme developed with strategic partners. Presentation on Belfast's role in Millennium 2027 – Heritage & Culture for Competitiveness	EUIRT; Culture Team	NI Executive Office in Brussels; Irish Regions EU Office; Committee of the Regions	12-14 October 2026	Informing Belfast-EU work plan; identification of key European partners; profiling Belfast	All party delegation in attendance
European Capital of Innovation bid 2026	Belfast City Council submitted bid to European Innovation Council for the annual award	City Innovation Office	Innovation City Belfast and other innovation partners	Outcome of stage one application expected September 2026	Profiling Belfast as a "city of innovation"	Members will feature in engagement in the development of the bid – and in any shortlisting process
Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge	Alongside 23 other cities, this is two year programme harnessing digital and innovation. In Belfast the focus is on supporting an alleyway transformation programme	City Innovation Office /City & Neighbourhood Services	Bloomberg and the other 23 cities	February 2026 to March 2028. BCC to host Bloomberg senior team 22-23 October 2026	Sustainable, scalable alleyways transformation programme. Plus supporting council leadership on innovation	Members are/will be involved in the local programme design
Bloomberg Philanthropies CityLab	An international network of city mayors sharing practice and opportunities on city innovation	City Innovation Office/Deputy Chief Executive	Extensive global network	Engagement ongoing	Support for Deputy CX in shaping transformation in Council by harnessing CityLab opportunities	CX and Lord Mayor have been invited to engage
Smart City World Congress	Promotion of city messaging, focusing on opportunities for partnership, investment, research and trade in relation to digital innovation	ICB	ICB partners	November 2026 – Attendance TBC	Leads in relation to partnerships, investment, research and funding opportunities	No member engagement at this point
Support education partners international activity (focus on sister city)	Use civic linkages to enhance international collaborations in innovation, research and attraction of international talent (links)	EUIRT; City Innovation Office; ICB	Third level education partners	Ongoing inward visits from international colleges	Education partners secure research income; attract international students	Member engagement on case-by-case basis
DBEC	Ongoing support for civic/business engagement work, including developing lobbying approach on key infrastructure investments. Focus on collaboration with new Industry Advisory Group	EBG	DBEC Partners	Current research focus on potential economic impact of major infrastructure investments (esp. transport). Recent confirmation of successful funding bid to SEUPB with DBEC as associate partner. Project is C-CASE (Cross-Border Collaboration to Activate the Skills Ecosystem) project. Project will launch in November - council to house staff member (tbc)	Wider programme of collaboration and engagement on key north-south issues, focusing on economic growth	Member representation through Political Advisory Group

City Positioning, Tourism Promotion and Cultural Development

Project/Initiative	Brief Overview	Council Lead	Partners	Timeframe	Priority Outputs and Benefits	Opportunities for Member Engagement
77th Year of Founding of Chinese People's Republic	Annual celebration led by the Chinese Consulate and involving all	EUIRT, LM Office	Consulate, CWA, Confucius	22 September 2026	Civic, diplomatic support from BCC to Chinese community	LM/DLM and DCX will attend along with other invited councillors.
UNESCO City of Music	Ongoing network engagement. Support for Belfast-based musician	Culture Team	UNESCO network; Oulu Irish Festival	Event takes place 23-27 September 2026	Professional development for musicians, opportunity to showcase	Member engagement opportunities on a case by case basis, depending
Eurocities Culture Forum	Ongoing learning and partnership opportunities with Eurocities member cities. Member of Eurocities Culture Forum steering group and vice chair role within working group Culture for Inclusive Cities	Culture Team	EUIRT; Eurocities network	Next meeting 20 September to 2 October in Gothenburg	Sharing Belfast's story via presentation, shared learning and opportunities for international engagement and partnership with council and cultural sector	Chair of CGR invited to members' panel
Irish Presidency of EU activities	Working with local and Brussels-based partners to explore opportunities for civic engagement in Irish Presidency activities via Committee of the Regions UK Contact Group. The council will host Committee of the Regions delegation in City Hall on 20/10	EUIRT	NILGA; CoR UK Contact Group	Delegation to visit on 20 October	Opportunities to showcase Belfast and explore opportunities for wider civic and cultural partnerships	LM will greet COR delegation and Members will be invited to the lunch on 20 October
Friendship Four Tournaments	US College Ice Hockey Tournaments linked to Boston Sister	LM Office	Odyssey Trust, NI Connections, DfC, Tourism NI	November 26 (men's tournament) and January 27 (women's)	Economic impact on city: bed nights; TV coverage	LM is usually invited for puck drop
Inaugural Celebration of India National Day	Annual celebration event	EUIRT, LM Office	Indian Consulate	26 January 2027	Supports engagement with Indian community in Belfast - civic relations	Details to be confirmed
Celebrate Chinese New Year	Participation in partner events to celebrate lunar new year	LM Office; EUIRT	Good Relations Team; Chinese partners locally	Early February 2027	Enhanced civic relations	Details tbc
Your Roots Are Showing	Folk music conference and trade fair	Culture Team	Visit Belfast; ICC Belfast (host)	23-28 February 2027	Improved city positioning (focusing on music/culture)	No member engagement at this point
Supporting strategic tourism stakeholders	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	Fleadh team; Tourism, Culture & Events Team	Visit Belfast; Tourism Ireland; Tourism NI; Comhaltas	Ongoing research, engagement, evaluation, partnership development and comms	International positioning and profiling opportunities; increasing visitor numbers	Members involved in wider plans for Fleadh and other major events