



Subject:	Request for Funding for Halloween event in City Centre
Date:	18 September 2026
Reporting Officer:	Keith Forster, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Lesley-Ann O'Donnell, Senior Manager, Culture & Tourism

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The report details a request from BID One for part funding to support Halloween activities in the City Centre.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Members are asked to consider the request.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Belfast One is aiming to create a joined-up Halloween experience that is highly visible, accessible and enjoyable for residents and visitors, bringing the giant Halloween monsters back to landmark buildings across the city centre, alongside the Belfast One Pumpkin Patch, activities at 2 Royal Avenue, business promotions and community participation.
3.2	2025 Halloween experience The 2025 Halloween programme demonstrated the strong appeal of a coordinated city centre event. The giant monster installations created a highly visible trail across Belfast, encouraging people to explore the city, take photographs and share their experience online. The installations generated more than 1.2 million total views and reached approximately 500,000 people across social media.
3.3	At City Hall, the Belfast One Pumpkin Patch distributed 1,300 pumpkins and welcomed around 5,000 visitors. Visitors were also directed to other Halloween activities across the city centre by an interactive map, helping to extend their visit and encourage movement between locations.
3.4	The Spooktacular Activity Centre at 2 Royal Avenue welcomed more than 5,000 visitors over the weekend, with pumpkin painting, face painting, crafts and the Creepy Crawly Farm. Quiet sessions were also provided each morning for children with additional needs. Together, these activities created a fun, inclusive atmosphere while supporting footfall and engagement across Belfast City Centre.
3.5	Members are advised that the 2025 programme was part-funded by Belfast City Council with £50K from departmental budget and reserves created to support city animation. In 2024 £40K was provided through grant funding.
3.6	Proposed 2026 Halloween Experience The total proposal for 2026 BID One activity is a continuation of this activity with an estimated total delivery cost of £125K - 10 Giant inflatable monsters on buildings across Belfast City Centre, creating a strong visual attraction and encouraging visitors to explore and share content online. - A free, ticketed two-day Pumpkin Patch at City Hall, linked to pumpkin decorating and carving activities at 2 Royal Avenue.

	- Family-friendly creative and interactive activities, including storytelling, workshops and displays developed with local community and cultural organisations at 2 Royal Avenue - A Halloween trail map and participating business offers to encourage footfall and spend.
3.7	The two city centre shopping centres will also fund and deliver activity in their areas as part of the wider programme and the overall programme will be supported by marketing campaign involving promotion across digital, social media and other relevant channels.
3.8	BID One have identified the following expected outcomes and impact from the programme of activity: • Increase footfall across Belfast City Centre during Halloween. • Create a positive, safe and memorable experience for families, residents and visitors. • Support local businesses through increased visibility, visitor movement and promotions. • Generate strong social media engagement through highly visual installations. • Increase community and cultural participation. • Strengthen Belfast City Centre's reputation as a fun and family-friendly Halloween destination.
3.9	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> BID one are seeking financial support from BCC on par with 2025 of £50,000 to support the delivery of the programme Funding for city animation was included as a growth proposal for 2026/2027 but as Members will be aware, following the quarter 1 financial report, funding is not available to support further growth proposals at this time. It is understood that In the absence of funding from Belfast City Council whilst monster installations would still be delivered, potentially at a reduced level, the Pumpkin Patch would not go ahead and other elements of the programme would either be removed or be significantly scaled back.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.10	None associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	None