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| <b>Subject:</b>           | Sister Cities Management                |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2015               |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | John McGrillen, Director of Development |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Laura Leonard, European Unit Manager    |

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| <b>Is this report restricted?</b>            | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <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>   |
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| 1.1        | Members will be aware that one of the key commitments in the Council's Investment Programme 2012 - 2015, is that the Council will work with city partners to promote Belfast proactively on the international stage to attract trade and investment, increase visitor and student numbers and build the networks necessary to support growth.  |
| 1.2        | Over the past two years, work has been undertaken to develop and deliver an International Relations Framework and Action Plan that seeks to shape how city stakeholders can work together in a stronger and purposeful way, to maximise the economic impact for Belfast as a whole.  |
| 1.3        | This framework and a two year action plan were agreed by Members at the August 2013 Development Committee. An update report was presented to the Development Committee on 17 February 2015. The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval to explore opportunities and implications of putting in place partnership-based management arrangements to guide and support the respective work programmes to oversee and support the formal Sister City Relationships with Boston and Nashville. |

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| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 2.1        | <p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Note and endorse the proposal to convene a steering group of relevant local partners to take forward opportunities for Belfast – Boston collaboration.</li> <li>– Note and endorse the proposal to re-convene relevant partners from the Belfast – Nashville steering group to identify opportunities for collaboration between the cities.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>  |
| 3.1        | <p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The current aims of the International Relations Framework are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To maximise economic return of development for Belfast.</li> <li>– To increase the economic benefits of marketing Belfast internationally.</li> </ul> <p>3.2</p> <p>The framework has the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To deliver increased economic return to Belfast through collaborative international promotion.</li> <li>– To develop meaningful international partnerships and civic relationships to support Belfast’s growth.</li> <li>– To promote the attractiveness of the city for business, education and tourism.</li> <li>– To create the optimum mechanisms for international promotion of Belfast.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proposed Future International Relations Activity 2015 – 2016</u></p> <p>3.3</p> <p>The International Relations Programme for 2015 – 2016 contains activities which can deliver on the aims and objectives set out in the International Relations Framework, across the priority target markets and areas of work.</p> <p>In line with these aims and objectives, a series of proposed activities are set out below, focusing on the linkages with Boston and Nashville, currently the only two US-based sister city linkages that Belfast has in place.</p> |

### Boston

3.4

- Members should note that the Mayor of Boston is in the final stages of setting up a Belfast – Boston steering group. This will comprise of 5 voluntary members chaired by a politician including two business, one clergy and one third sector representatives. This group will be confirmed by the end of May 2015.
- It is proposed that a similar steering group is established in Belfast, based on those currently active in Boston or those interested in developing further links, in line with the international framework objectives. Based on existing and potential opportunities for collaboration, the Belfast-based group may comprise relevant political representation (Chair and Deputy Chair of City Growth and Regeneration Committee), third sector representation, academic representation and faith-based representation. Consideration may also be given to business representation in order to explore economic linkages.

There are a number of partners who are already undertaking a range of direct engagements with Boston include:

- PSNI is hosting two Boston Police delegations in April and May this year to look at community policing and interface work. The delegates will meet with the Lord Mayor and party leaders during these visits.
- Belfast Youth Orchestra is planning a concert in Boston in July this year (The Council has agreed to commit £5,000 towards this with additional funding being sought from other sources).
- Rev Bill Shaw regularly hosts inward visits from faith/community organisations in Boston through links with the North Eastern University.

### Nashville

3.5

Members will be aware that there has been a sister city relationship between Belfast and Nashville for some years. Activities of those partners working on Belfast – Nashville initiatives were previously co-ordinated through a steering group and the council's Tourism Development Unit historically provided the secretariat for this group, given the original focus on cultural linkages. Partners have been working independently on their linkages and there are a number of mature partnerships which continue to function without any requirement for city council support. There are a number of new potential opportunities for collaboration that have recently emerged. These include:

- In October 2014, Ross Graham from Generator NI met with the Sister Cities contact, Tracy Kane, as part of a music delegation to Nashville, sponsored by UKTI

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|                   | <p>(UK Trade &amp; Investment). Ross visited the Nashville Entrepreneur Centre to discuss opportunities for residencies for local artists and music businesses. This centre is just in its infancy and there is an opportunity to explore potential collaboration in the near future, particular with regards to connecting it with the proposed Belfast Creative Hub.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Queen’s University have active linkages with both Vanderbilt and Belmont Universities. In November 2014, twelve staff involved in international research activity took part in a visit to the city and a reciprocal visit is currently being planned.</li> </ul> <p>There are ongoing linkages with the Belfast/Nashville Songwriters’ Festival and these continue to develop year on year. The organisers for the festival are in regular contact with the Sister Cities office.</p> <p>3.6 In order to identify the current status of links between organisations in Belfast and Nashville, it is proposed that a meeting is held to bring together those partners currently active in collaborative projects. The purpose of the meeting will be to understand the scale and scope of current linkages and to identify whether there is any added value in taking a wider perspective on those linkages, through a city partnership steering group.</p> <p>3.7 <u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u><br/>A budget of £150,000 has been set aside for the delivery of the Council’s International Relations Framework and Action Plan.</p> <p>3.8 <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u><br/>The International Relations Framework has been equality screened.</p> |
| <p><b>4.0</b></p> | <p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>   |
| <p>4.1</p>        | <p>None</p>   |