



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Derry/Londonderry City of Culture 2013 – Support from Belfast City for the Derry City Council Bid
Date:	23 April 2010
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Relevant Background Information

In July 2009, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport launched a national competition to find the UK's first City of Culture.

The winning city will become the focus for national attention in 2013 and could become the focus of high profile media events, such as the Turner prize, Sports Personality of the Year and the RIBA Stirling Prize, as part of their year in the spotlight. The successful host city will be provided with the title of UK City of Culture for 2013, with scope to tailor the UK City of Culture brand to meet the needs of that city.

On 24th February, 2010 the Culture Minister, Margaret Hodge, announced that 4 cities had been short-listed from the 14 bidders; they are Birmingham, Derry/Londonderry, Norwich and Sheffield.

The deadline for full and final bid documentation from the short-listed cities is the end of May. During the summer, the advisory panel tasked with selecting the winning bid will receive presentations from the short-listed cities and will make their final recommendation to the Secretary of State by the end of the summer.

In order to maximise the potential of producing a winning bid Derry City Council is seeking the support of the 25 other local authorities in Northern Ireland.

Key Issues

A key element of the Derry City Council's bid is the benefits which will be gained not only by the city, but all areas of Northern Ireland. It is important that this is recognised and validated by the other local authorities. Given Belfast's scale and influence it is of particular importance that Belfast City Council is seen to be supportive of the Derry/Londonderry bid.

As the City of Belfast is the principal gateway and tourist attraction in Northern Ireland a successful bid by Derry City Council will have a positive impact on Belfast as it is most likely that those attracted to Derry will also spend time visiting Belfast and other parts of the province.

Derry/Londonderry's range of venues are limited in terms of capacity and it is probable that any very large event secured as part of the City of Culture celebrations may have to be staged in the Odyssey Arena.

Within the city's campaign, there is also the opportunity for Belfast-based individuals and organisations to showcase their talent.

Derry City Council is very supportive of the proposals to promote Belfast in 2012 as this will form a platform for Derry/Londonderry to promote its activities the following year.

In order to obtain the support of Belfast City Council the Chief Executive of Derry City Council has written to Belfast City Council seeking the Council's formal endorsement for their bid and has highlighted a number of ways in which Belfast could assist their bid.

They include:-

- Registering the Council's support on the City of Culture 2013 website.
- Including a sign-off as part of Belfast City Council's e-mail system.
- Identifying Cultural Champions to create cultural linkages between the 2 cities.
- The involvement of Belfast-based creative talent in a range of events.
- Raising awareness through –
 - Creating a link between the Belfast City Council website and the City of Culture 2013 website;
 - Providing an information point in City Hall and displaying literature as to how people may get involved;
 - Profile the City of Culture bid at forthcoming events and in venues;
 - Providing an endorsement statement and appropriate photograph for use by Derry City in promoting their bid.

Derry City Council also believe it would be most useful to have a letter of endorsement from the Lord Mayor supporting their bid

Resource Implications

<u>Financial</u>

None.

<u>Human Resources</u>

A limited amount of staff time would be required to implement the actions set out above.
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Recommendations

It is recommended the Committee supports the Derry/Londonderry City of Culture 2013 bid and approves that officers undertake the above actions as requested by Derry City Council.
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