



Subject:	Boston Youth Transformation Project- Update
Date:	14 October 2015
Reporting Officer:	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives & International Development,
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Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Provide Members with further information in respect to the proposed Sister City Youth Transformation Project.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Consider and agree Council support for the Youth Transformation Project, up to a value of £40,000.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Belfast – Boston Youth Transformation Project</u> Members will be aware that in May 2014, Belfast City Council signed a Sister City Agreement with the city of Boston in order to increase economic development, trade and investment, tourism, youth, cultural, faith-based exchange and educational linkages for both cities.
3.2	As part of this work, the theme of youth engagement emerged as a priority for potential

collaboration between the cities.

3.3 In the course of a number of preliminary visits and engagements between the cities, the North Eastern University (NEU) and the Irish International Immigrants Centre in Boston have proposed to develop a two city Youth Transformation Project.

3.4 The overarching aim of the proposed project is to encourage and empower a small group of young, unemployed men and women from Belfast and Boston to be future leaders in their communities, and to work towards building an inclusive and participatory society in both cities.

3.5 Both cities experience disadvantage, intolerance and fraction. This project seeks to facilitate integration and transformation: not only of the young participants and how they view themselves in society but also of how systems deal with young people in need.

3.6 The target group in mind are those who are unemployed from 15 – 25 years of age but who equally have the potential and commitment to become change leaders in their community.

3.7 The Council has established a local steering group in order to inform and deliver the intended project. It includes key stakeholders in this area, such as the 174 Trust, Springboard, Probation Board NI, PSNI, Stratagem, Youth Justice Agency and Belfast Metropolitan College. Members will be aware from the previous report that the main thrust of the project is to:

3.8 Stage 1

- Recruit and prepare 12 young people from each city to develop their self confidence and community leadership skills as well as undergoing a programme of study which will enhance skills transferable into the labour market (e.g. communication, presentation, report writing etc). The recruitment will be undertaken by experienced members of the project steering group who will also develop the criteria to ensure a balanced grouping.
- Each group of young people will work with their stakeholders agencies (listed above) in their respective cities on addressing barriers that young people face with regards to conflict, policing and justice.
- Enable young beneficiaries to develop analytical skills and produce

recommendations in regard to conflict resolution, policing and transitional justice.

Stage 2

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- Undertake an intensive 7 day programme in the Sister City which will enable them to appreciate the processes and systems applied in creating inclusive societies capable of assisting disenfranchised young people and identifying opportunities for change.
- Enable participants to visit key agencies in both cities such as the police, the judicial and justice systems, community leaders, and educational establishments.

Stage 3

3.10

- Document reflections, learning, and develop recommendations and pilot initiatives for consideration by both cities in respect to meeting the needs of young people who experience inequality.
- Each participant will be expected to present their learning to a group of their peers.

Ongoing developmental work at the local and transnational level has identified the following project outputs:

For the Individual Participants

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- Develop personal and life skills to enhance employment opportunities.
- Increased awareness of what it means to be an active citizen, role in society and developing a more global perspective on citizenship.
- Greater awareness as to how they can make a difference in their local communities and in the world.
- Development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in relation to the economic, political and social issues that young people face.
- Demonstration of an understanding of social justice and human rights and application of the same to assert their rights.
- Develop participants' ability to promote valuable role of young people in society.
- Identification and assessment of measures to deal with division and intolerance in both the home and Sister City as demonstrated through a final presentation.
- Be inspired to pursue continuing and further higher education opportunities.
- Attainment of a recognised accreditation in community leadership.

As a Stand Alone Initiative

3.12

- Empowerment of 12 unemployed young people from across the cities of Belfast

and Boston to be future leaders in their communities.

- Increased opportunities for youth participation in civic engagement.
- Development of policy recommendations as to how each city can create inclusive societies, which are considered at the local and regional level in each Sister City.
- Introduce participants to cultures of partner city through host family stay, site-visits and higher education institutions.
- Identify personal learning opportunities of each participant through mentoring opportunities.
- Enable participants to affect change and challenge the treatment of disengaged and disenfranchised youth.
- Create role models within local neighbourhoods that inspire other young people to become active and motivated citizens.
- Qualified and inspired beneficiaries with personalised future pathway plan.
- Identification of potential scholarship opportunities to enable further study, where appropriate.

3.13

This project was a key component of the Lord Mayor's recent visit to Boston and a number of key partners were briefed on the project's status including Mayor Walsh, Boston Police, the State Department, the Vice President of NorthEastern University, the Irish American Partnership and the Fish Family Foundation - all of whom have an interest in the initiative and further exploration within NorthEastern University, the State Department and Fish Family Foundation may lever in financial assistance for the overall project.

3.14

In order to secure the partnership, financial intervention from Council is required as a means to ensure the project's momentum can continue. Officers will also seek to lever in financial support from local partners.

3.15

The project has, as its projected timeframe, to recruit the young people from both cities by the end of November, develop and deliver agreed programme content around the 3 thematic areas as well as developing essential skills, undertake both visits by end of Spring 2016 and compile project findings by early summer.

3.16

Financial and Resource Implications

It is estimated the Council participation may incur the maximum budgetary costs, which will be met within the existing budget :

	<p>Boston – Belfast Youth Transformation Project - £40,000.</p> <p>This amount may not be required in full as Officers will continue to work with local stakeholders to lever potential funding that has been identified (e.g. the Youth Justice Agency and Assets Recovery subvention) as well as pursuing the transnational leads resulting from the recent Boston mission, notably through the US State Department, North Eastern University and the Fish Family Foundation. Council agreement is required for the stated amount to enable the project to progress in the interim, and should the other sources mentioned above contribute to the initiative then Council’s budget will be reduced accordingly.</p> <p>3.17 The £40,000 contribution would assist with the costs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recruitment – Pre departure training – Programme content refinement with the young people – Travel – Hosting – Local stakeholder administration costs – Publication of policy recommendations – Essential skills training <p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>3.18 No specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	None