



Subject:	Cathedral Quarter Business Improvement District – update and request for support
Date:	9 December 2015
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development,
Contact Officer:	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development

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 advise members of a funding request received from Cathedral Quarter Trust (CQT) to support the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) in the Cathedral Quarter.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	It is recommended that Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Note the request for support received from Cathedral Quarter Trust for resources towards the development work on the “Destination CQ” BID– Agree to allocate £10,000 from existing budgets towards the activity, in the current financial year, subject to CQT attracting match funding from other funders– Agree that the bid ballot should be run by a third party – Electoral Reform Services – on behalf of the Council. All costs associated with the ballot will be paid by the BID.

3.0	Key issues
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that the first Business Improvement District (BID) in Belfast was approved in late October 2015 and will be operational from April 2016. The “Belfast One” area includes the majority of the primary retail core in the city centre, from City Hall to Castlecourt. Work is also under way on a second BID, namely “Destination CQ”. This covers the Cathedral Quarter area of the city – around 600 properties in total. The draft business plan for Destination CQ was launched in late November 2015. The ballot will open on 3 March 2016 and will close on 14 April 2016. If the ballot is successful, it is likely that the BID will be operational from Autumn 2016.</p>
3.2	<p>The Destination CQ BID anticipates generating an annual income of around £300,000 from the BID levy. The draft business plan contains a range of priority actions under four themes of Create, Celebrate, Invite and Inspire. The main driver is to maintain and develop the vibrancy of the city’s cultural district.</p>
3.3	<p>While the development work on the Belfast One business plan was undertaken by a dedicated BID Development Manager, the work in Cathedral Quarter is being undertaken by Cathedral Quarter Trust alongside its other priority activities. The lessons learned from the Belfast One exercise include the need for dedicated resources in order to secure business buy-in to the process. In September this year, CQT asked the Council for a sum of £29,000 towards a similar resource but the Council was not in a position to provide that level of funding at the time. The Trust has now submitted a request for £10,000 towards this development work, and is seeking match funding support from both Department for Social Development (DSD) and Tourism NI (£30,000 in total being sought).</p>
3.4	<p>The funding from the Council would be used to cover staff costs for a full-time BID Development Manager for a period of six months as well as some overheads associated with the project.</p>
3.5	<p>According to the legislation, the BID ballot is to be carried out by the local authority, or an agent acting on their behalf. For the Belfast One BID, this work was carried out by Electoral Reform Services (ERS), who have also undertaken this function for many of the BIDs elsewhere. It is proposed that ERS will be appointed to carry out the ballot for the Destination CQ BID. If agreed, ERS will be appointed by CQT and the costs will be met by CQT from any income that they receive.</p>

3.6	<p><u>Resource Implications</u></p> <p>CQT estimates that the development costs for the period between January 2016 and the operation of the BID will be around £30,000. It has made a request to the council for a contribution of £10,000 towards these costs. This funding is available within current Development Department budgets.</p> <p>The BID expects to lever an annual income of £300,000 through the levy payments.</p> <p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.7	<p>No specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices</p>
4.1	<p>There are no appendices.</p>