



Subject:	International Relations Framework Update
Date:	10 February 2016
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Laura Leonard, European & International Relations Manager

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	To provide Members with an update on the delivery of the International Relations Framework (IRFW) 2013 – 2015 and to set out the proposed approach for developing a new framework, as part of a wider programme of City promotion.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- note the content of the report and;- agree to receive a future report setting out the proposed future international relations framework, based on evaluation work undertaken by staff and supported external advice
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	Members will be aware that one of the key commitments in the Council's Investment Programme 2012 - 2015 was that the Council would 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.
3.2	In this context, an International Relations Framework and Action Plan were developed to shape how city stakeholders could work together to maximise the economic impact for Belfast.

3.3	<p>The existing framework includes a number of aims and supporting objectives. These relate to developing meaningful partnerships with key cities in order to support economic growth in Belfast and to improve the perception of the city as a dynamic business location. The role of the city council is one of an enabler and broker, and the framework identifies the importance of involving other partner organisations in order to make the relationships sustainable.</p>
3.4	<p>This framework and a 2 year plan were agreed by Members at the August 2013 Development Committee. Since that time Members have received updates outlining delivery of the action plan and highlighting additional areas of work that have arisen within the broad framework that was agreed.</p>
3.5	<p>The purpose of this report is to identify activities that took place under the International Relations Framework, highlight some of the outputs to date, set out some of the key challenges and issues for the future framework and consider proposed future activity in the context of a changing internal and external environment.</p>
3.6	<p>Throughout the delivery of the International Relations Framework, the Council has sought to add value to, endorse and maximise international connections that already existed within the Council itself or with city stakeholders. We have done this by working closely with partners such as the universities, Invest NI, Belfast Metropolitan College, the British Council and government departments and agencies.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Overview of activity to date</u></p> <p>The following actions have been delivered throughout the lifetime of the International Relations Framework 2013 – 2015:</p>
3.8	<p><u>USA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Participated in South by South West in 2013, 2014 and 2015. – Undertook business mission to Nashville in 2013. – Undertook exploration mission to Washington, New York, New Brunswick and Toronto in 2013. – Hosted Nashville during Belfast Music Week in 2013. – Undertook West Coast USA Tech Mission in 2013, 2014 and 2015. – Undertook 5 outward missions to develop the Boston Sister City Agreement. – Facilitated Belfast business mission to New York in 2014. – Hosted Massachusetts State Senate visit in 2014. – Hosted New York State Comptroller in 2014.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hosted Boston Police / Justice programme in 2014. - Secured first ever NCAA Friendship Four ice hockey tournament in 2015. - Facilitated Boston introductions for Belfast Youth Orchestra and the Outburst theatre company. - Hosted New York Legislators visit in 2015.
3.9	<p><u>Europe</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Input into European policy and funding programme development for the period 2014 – 2020. - Undertook tourism showcase mission to Bilbao in 2013. - Signed Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor MOU Agreement in 2013. - Showcased Belfast at the Brussels annual Open Days in 2013, 2014 and 2015. - Showcased Belfast at the Eurocities AGM in 2013, 2014 and 2015. - Established and led the NI European Forum 2012 – 2015.
3.10	<p><u>China</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supported Chinese New Year 2013, 2014, 2015 with city stakeholders. - Reviewed Belfast Sister City relationship with Hefei, attended Hefei Sister Cities Conference in 2013 and hosted 2 inward Hefei business, civic and arts missions to Belfast. - Hosted 15 civic visits for Chinese students in Belfast over 3 years. - Helped facilitate establishment of new Chinese Consulate Office opening in Belfast 2015 (Planning introductions, partner introductions and regular briefings). - Hosted 5 inward business and political missions from China over 3 years. - Supported local artists in Beijing through the Belfast Wave project exhibition 2013. - Signed Friendly Cooperation agreement with Shenyang in 2013, leading to the interest of OFMDFM to open a satellite office in the Province in 2016. - Undertaking city mission to Beijing and Shenyang in May 2016, in partnership with city stakeholders.
3.11	<p><u>India</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council exploratory visit to India in April 2013 in partnership with Invest NI and Tourism Ireland. - Secured and hosted the Global India Business Meeting in June 2013. - Delivered Belfast in India Week with 40 city events in June 2013. - Hosted 2 ministerial visits from India in 2013. - Facilitated Belfast Metropolitan College engagement in a British Council training for

export project – UKIERI, supporting Belfast SME's into the Indian market, 2014 – 2015.

- Secure Challenge UK India project providing a platform to promote tourism, education and trade opportunities in India, September 2015 – March 2016.

3.12 Some of the Key outcomes to date include:

- The Global India event, which was attended by 300 delegates, generated 18 investment leads (some of which are still under development) and provided opportunities for 47 local companies to pitch to key partners/targets.
- Supported signature of link between NI Chamber of Commerce and Mumbai Chamber of Commerce as platform for future collaboration.
- £90,000 secured from UK Challenge Fund (supported by UKTI) to undertake promotional events in India for creative industries and music development sectors.
- Hosted the first annual Friendship Four Ice Hockey event, securing £275,000 of spend and significant positive media coverage for the city and event in the USA.
- Provided political and civic support to facilitate development of local university and colleges work in China
- Secured \$20,000 bursary for two Belfast schools through Boston contacts.
- Secured EU funding for Waterfront Hall and Innovation Factory development.
- Supported expert development opportunities for 60 local businesses to USA markets on West Coast (Tech Mission) and in Austin (through SXSW participation).
- Brokered introductions to relevant partner institutions in USA, helping local business to develop new clients and joint ventures.
- New clients and joint ventures secured through the Council's brokerage of introductions of small businesses to US partner institutions.

Interim Activities (2016/17)

3.13 While the details of the new International Relations Framework have not been finalised, there are a number of existing commitments already in place for the coming year. In endorsing these activities, Members have taken account of the fact that, in the absence of the agreed framework, the proposed activities contribute to a range of broader council initiatives. These include the Belfast Agenda, the Integrated Tourism Framework and the City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy. Activities will include:

- Council participation in Sister Cities Summit in Dublin in April 2016 (subject to committee approval), as well as hosting Nashville and Boston delegations in Belfast in advance of the Dublin event.

- Lord Mayor visit to Boston in February 2016 to develop additional economic linkages, including planning for potential inward business mission at the end of 2016.
- Further development work on Youth Transformation Project between Boston and Belfast.
- Lord Mayor to undertake civic visit to Nashville in March 2016, including participation in Tourism Ireland promotional event.
- Attendance at South by Southwest music business event as part of business delegation with Invest NI.
- Continue to explore relevant EU funding opportunities for Belfast City Council, in line with corporate priorities.
- Civic visit to Shenyang alongside academic and business partners in May 2016.

Future Framework

3.14 Members will acknowledge that, since the development of the International Relations Framework in 2013, there are now a number of strategic discussions with which any future international relations framework should align. These include the Belfast Agenda, City Centre Regeneration, and Investment Strategy and Place Positioning.

3.15 In addition to developments within the council, our key partners have also been working on a number of frameworks of which we should be cognisant. These include:

- NI Executive International Relations Strategy 2014 – 2020
- NI Executive China Strategy 2015 – 2020
- Invest NI's Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020
- DETI's Export Matters Strategy 2016 – 2020
- Emerging new Programme for Government
- Revised Northern Ireland Economic Strategy

3.16 As such, when developing a new International Relations Framework, consideration must be given to the changing context for intervention. Likewise, greater focus will be placed on the added value of investment along with consideration of resources and the ability to secure partner buy-in.

3.17 In order to develop the new framework, it is proposed that officers undertake some early engagement with partner organisations to establish the added value that the Council can bring. This will be supported by independent advisory support to look at how this issue is managed in other areas and to give an objective view of the best way forward for the council

	and the city, including consideration of how measureable outcomes can be established.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.18	A maximum of £10,000 (from within the agreed budget) will be used to undertake the international relations review work.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u>
3.19	Officers will work with the Equality Officer to determine how equality and good relations should be considered in the development of the future Framework.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None