



Subject:	Lagan Canal Trust
Date:	10 August 2016
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic 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 or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of the report is to ask Members to consider a request for funding from the Lagan Canal Trust for 2016/17.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Consider a funding request of £17,000 for 2016/17 from the Lagan Canal Trust, in support of its ongoing developmental work along the Lagan Canal.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u> <p>In 2006, Members approved the establishment of the Lagan Canal Trust, which had the long-term aim of re-opening the canal from Belfast to Lough Neagh. The Trust engaged with a range of stakeholders including the Lagan Valley Regional Park, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the local authorities through whose areas the Lagan Canal runs, which includes Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.</p>
3.2	The Trust has highlighted the organisational activities in relation to the Belfast parts of the Lagan Canal, listed in Appendix 1 .
3.3	Financial support from local government had previously been calculated by the Trust on

the basis of the number of miles of canal within each authority's area. Prior to 2015, this was 18% of the total for Belfast and now stands at 22% following boundary changes (35% is within the Lisburn and Castlereagh area). This would equate to around £40,000 for Belfast.

3.4 Given funding constraints, Belfast City Council was only able to offer funding of £17,000 in the 2015-2016 financial year. It is proposed the financial contribution from the Council is retained at this level for 2016/17. It is anticipated that increased assistance from BCC officers can off-set some of the implications of the shortfall in funding.

3.5 The work of the Lagan Canal Trust aligns to the priorities set out in the Tourism Strategy.

3.6 This identifies:-

- The core objective of the Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy is doubling the economic value of tourism by 2020. A fundamental element of this will be increasing the duration of visitor stays i.e. converting the day visitor to an overnight stay and increasing the number of nights spent in the City. A key element of this will be better connectivity and packaging across the City. Projects such as the Lagan Canal give visitors another reason to extend their stay in the City and add to the visitor experience.
- The need to build capacity, especially in terms of improving accessibility. The Lagan Corridor, especially with the extended city boundary and connectivity to both the city centre and Titanic Quarter, has much potential to give visitors access to important cultural assets as well as a stunning historically important rural landscape.
- A 'city' approach – utilising the potential to increase opportunities or day trips for tourists based in the city. The Lagan Corridor is of the correct scale and interest to enable this.
- Urban sports – there is already substantial usage for both the gentle leisure pursuits, such as walking and cycling along the towpath and for more adrenalin sports like slalom kayaking, mountain biking linked to already developed trails. These are likely to appeal to the 'Mature Cosmopolitans'/'Time Together' and 'Young and Lively' market segments, respectively.

3.7 Financial Implications

£17,000 was allocated in the Development Department budget as part of the estimate setting process for 2016/17.

3.8	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> No specific Equality or Good Relations Implications.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	Appendix 1 – Lagan Canal Trust: Recent Organisation Activity relating to the Belfast City Council Area.