



<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Visitor Attraction
<b>Date:</b>	8 February 2017
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nuala Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Eimear Henry, Cultural Regeneration Manager

<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Update Members on the ongoing development of proposals for a new visitor attraction for Belfast City Centre.</li><li>– Outline next steps and proposed programme of work.</li></ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Note the contents of this report and proposed next steps.</li><li>– Agree expenditure of up to £120,000 to be taken to SP&amp;R to approve procurement process.</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Members will recall that in January 2016 approval was granted to undertake feasibility work on a major city centre cultural and visitor attraction with further updates provided to City Growth and Regeneration Committee in June 2016 and September 2016.</p> <p>The Belfast City Regeneration and Investment Strategy identifies the need for a major city</p>

3.2	<p>centre development recommending that serious consideration should be given to the opportunity to create a significant attraction or destination of national or international stature that is distinctive and unique to the city. Such a proposition is further supported by the Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020 and the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2016-2020. Both of these strategies identify the role of culture and heritage in engaging with local people and connecting the city globally.</p>
3.3	<p>In addition to these strategic drivers there is also an opportunity to align with emerging international opportunities. This project will be critical in making the case for Belfast by communicating the level of ambition, commitment and investment in delivering world class and authentic cultural experiences.</p>
3.4	<p>Feasibility work is ongoing and to date this work has largely considered the proposal under three priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for regeneration and community cohesion</li> <li>• The need to enhance the tourism offer of the city</li> <li>• The need for innovation and skills development to help grow the economy</li> </ul>
3.5	<p>An initial concept study and economic impact report have been completed and early indications are that such an attraction could result in a step change in the visitor economy resulting in significant increase in overnight stays, dwell time and spend in the city including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 24.7 % growth in overnight stays</li> <li>– 29.8% growth in number of nights stayed</li> <li>– 10.5% growth in spend per night</li> </ul>
3.6	<p>Further catalytic impacts include the potential for the hub to signpost to and support the existing cultural and tourism infrastructure in the city and the region.</p>
3.7	<p>This work culminated in the completion of a Strategic Outline Case recommending that options were taken forward into Outline Business Case.</p>
3.8	<p>The Strategic Outline Case has taken into consideration existing or emerging plans for other infrastructure projects within the cultural and tourism sectors and assessed these against six key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Regeneration: to develop a landmark city centre destination, increase footfall to area</li> </ul>

and increase footfall/visitors to neighbourhood attractions.

- Positioning: to promote Belfast’s inter-national reputation as a world class visitor destination.
- Economy: to become a catalyst for investment helping to stimulate sustainable economic activity and increase victory economy related employment offer.
- Community: to engage in Northern Ireland’s culture and heritage through the medium of art, cinema and storytelling.
- Learning: to promote learning and skills by establishing strong community and educational linkages.
- Innovation: to support clustering, shared working and showcasing of digital and creative talent.

3.9

The recommendation is that further detailed work should be undertaken to examine the viability of taking forward a single project incorporating a number of key component parts including:

- Belfast Stories visitor attraction
- A film centre including a cultural cinema
- Permanent and temporary exhibition space that can accommodate and support collaborations with major international artists and cultural brands
- A shared space for cultural / digital / media skills development
- Commercial space for retail, food and beverage

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Alongside this consideration has also been given for a dedicated gallery in the city and this will be brought forward into any future options appraisal. Belfast City Council continues to work closely with National Museums of Northern Ireland and the Arts Council for Northern Ireland on this proposal.

3.11

The work to date on developing a new visitor attraction has engaged with a number of key organisations through a steering group including representatives from:

- Belfast City Council
- Department for Communities
- National Museums of Northern Ireland
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Screen
- BBC NI

	<p style="text-align: center;">– Libraries NI</p> <p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>3.12 In line with the strategic outline case it is recommended that a work programme is taken forward over the next 18-24 months to assess the viability of a new visitor attraction and assess a series of options. This approach is considered standard and has been adopted by other cities when developing a multi-stakeholder proposition including local examples such as Titanic Belfast.</p> <p>3.13 This work programme will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development of the visitor attraction concept including a detailed design exercise.</li> <li>– Agreement on governance, organisational design and structure including identifying an appropriate governance and operating model for the project which clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of the various key stakeholders.</li> <li>– Masterplanning and delivery options.</li> <li>– Wider stakeholder engagement.</li> <li>– A viable funding model.</li> <li>– An outline business case to be presented to Council and government departments.</li> <li>– Identification of a suitable site and acquisition may be required. However this will be subject to a further report.</li> </ul> <p>3.14 At this stage it is envisaged that this work would be supported by Belfast City Council in partnership with Tourism NI and the Department of Communities. A bid of £250,000 has been made by Tourism NI for 2017/18 subject to approval.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.15 Up to £120,000 to be allocated from City Centre Development budgets for 2017/18 to contribute to financing of work programme.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>3.16 There are no Equality or Good Relations implications at this stage. Equality and Good Relations considerations will be examined as the project develops including community engagement.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>

4.1	None
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