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| Subject: | International Relations Update and 2017-18 Action Plan |
| Date: | 8 March 2017 |
| Reporting Officer: | Donal Durkan, Director of Development |
| Contact Officer: | Laura Leonard, European & International Relations Manager |

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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"/> |

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| 1.0 | Purpose of Report |
| 1.1 | The purpose of the report is to update Members on the delivery and actions of the International Relations Framework for the period 2016-2017, and to seek approval for the 2017/18 Action Plan. |
| 2.0 | Recommendations |
| 2.1 | <p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Note the range of activities and actions outlined in Appendix 1 for delivery of the Council’s International Relations Framework for the period 2016-17.– Agree to support the attendance of the Lord Mayor and an Officer at the 2017 St Patrick’s White House Celebration from 14-17 March 2017 at a maximum cost of £3,000.– Agree to the attendance of the Lord Mayor, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, or their nominees along with the Director of Development and the International Relations Manager on the China outward mission from 6-13 May 2017. This visit will not exceed £20,000. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agree to the attendance of the Lord Mayor, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or nominees and an Officer on the Nashville outward mission from 17-22 May 2017. The cost of this visit will not exceed £10,000. – Agree to Members participation in the programme for the Boston inward delegation on 5-7 June 2017. – Agree to provide £5,000 towards the New York New Belfast Conference from 8-9 June 2017 and the attendance of the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or their nominee along with an officer. The cost of attendance will not exceed £3,000. – Agree to provide £5,000 towards the Belfast International Homecoming Conference form 4-6 October 2017 and to Members’ participation in this event. – Agree in principle to further international activity later in the year, as outlined in Appendix 1 as 2017-18 International Relations Action Plan, pending further details and costs. |
| 3.0 | Main report |
| 3.1 | Members will recall the November 2016 approval of a new International Relations Framework for Council for the period 2016-2021. |
| 3.2 | The aim of this second Framework is to continue to promote Belfast on the international stage with other stakeholders as a place to visit, study, work and do business. The Framework will deliver primarily on the formal relationships already in existence through the Sister City Agreements with Shenyang, Boston and Nashville, the Memorandum of Understanding with Dublin, and developing relationships with London. New areas of opportunity will be considered on their merits and relevance to Belfast. |
| 3.3 | Members will be aware of the increasing activity delivered around the International Relations Framework during the last year. The highlights of these and the outcomes generated from our international linkages are outlined in Appendix 1 of this report by geographical area. These activities have, in the most part, been led by Belfast City Council at Councillor and Officer level and in full partnership with stakeholders in government, education, tourism, business, culture and sport. Members are asked to note this delivery and the progress made in these areas. |
| 3.4 | In terms of 2017-18 activity, there are a number of activities in the immediate to short term pipeline that align to the International Relations Framework and require Committee |

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| | <p>approval if they are to progress. The emerging priority activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – St Patrick’s Day invitation to the White House 14-17 March 2017 – Belfast in China Week 6-13 May 2017 – New York New Belfast 8-9 June 2017 – Belfast International Homecoming 4-6 October 2017 |
| 3.5 | <p>Other activities have already been planned within the International Relations Calendar which are outlined in Appendix 1 as the 2017/18 International Relations Action Plan.</p> |
| 3.6 | <p><u>St Patrick’s Day White House Invitation, 14-17 March 2017</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that the former Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Arder Carson, and an officer, travelled to the White House St Patrick’s Day celebrations in 2016. The current Lord Mayor has received an invitation through the office of the US Consul General in Belfast, to the 2017 celebrations from 14-17 March. This visit can coincide with a programme of side meetings with government and business associates of the Council in order to explore business, academic and tourism collaborations in line with the International Relations Framework.</p> |
| 3.7 | <p>Members are asked to approve the participation of the Lord Mayor and an Officer at the White House programme and associated meetings. The cost of travel, accommodation and expenses will not exceed £3,000 and will be met within the 2017/18 International Relations Unit budget.</p> |
| 3.8 | <p><u>Belfast in China Week, 6-13 May 2017</u></p> <p>Members will recall their decision on 9 November 2016, to approve a second Council visit to Beijing and Sister City Shenyang in May 2017. The purpose of this event is to further develop relations and agree concrete collaboration activity going forward on the fields of Smart Cities, sustainable technologies, health, education and investment. Planning is underway for the visit with city stakeholders including Invest NI, Queen’s University Belfast, Ulster University, Belfast Metropolitan College, British Council, and the NI Bureau, who are facilitating the programme for Belfast City Council as they did in 2016. A final programme will be presented to Members in due course. This will establish a series of agreed outcomes for the visit, in line with the outcomes established for the International Relations Framework.</p> |
| 3.9 | <p>Members are asked to approve the attendance of the Lord Mayor, the Chair and Deputy</p> |

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| | <p>Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or their nominees, along with the Director of Development and the International Relations Unit Manager and Confucius accompanying interpreter. The anticipated cost of this visit will not exceed £20,000, and this is contained within the 2017-18 budget of the International Relations Unit. Members should note that Invest NI, Queen’s University Belfast, Ulster University and Belfast Metropolitan College have confirmed their participation in the mission to create a second “Team Belfast” approach, and collective message during the mission.</p> <p><u>Nashville Mission, 17-20 May 2017</u></p> |
| 3.10 | <p>Again, Members will recall their decision on 9 November 2016 to approve a further Sister City visit to Nashville in 2017 to build on the relationships that had been re-established and developed in the course of that visit. Following close working with the Nashville Mayor and Sister City Board, the proposed dates are now 17-20 May. Ulster University and Queen’s University Belfast have already committed to the visit, and discussions are underway with other stakeholders including Invest NI, Belfast Metropolitan College and the Innovation Factory. Members will be presented with a detailed plan of activity in due course. The focus of the visit is likely to be on following upon business and education linkages to tie down actions for the coming year, as well as sharing plans for our respective activities as part of the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities Network.</p> |
| 3.11 | <p>Members should note that an invitation was received for the Lord Mayor of Belfast from Mayor Barry of Nashville to lead a delegation to Nashville. The proposed timeframe has been arranged to fit in with the diary of Mayor Barry.</p> |
| 3.12 | <p>Members should note that, given the Nashville and Shenyang visits are taking place in close proximity to one another, there may be logistical challenges for Members taking part in both visits.</p> |
| 3.13 | <p>In the meantime, Members are asked to approve the participation of the Lord Mayor, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or their nominees and an Officer at a maximum cost of £10,000. This cost is contained within the 2017-18 budget of the International Relations Unit.</p> <p><u>Boston Inward Mission, 5-7 June 2017</u></p> |
| 3.14 | <p>Members are asked to note that a further inward mission from Boston is scheduled to</p> |

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| | <p>take place from 5-7 June. This will include Senators, Senior Judiciary, business and economic development officials, as well as Harvard and arts representatives. Plans are underway to develop a targeted programme of meetings and visit with key stakeholders. Members will be invited to join the programme and any costs of the visit will be contained within the International Relations 2017-18 budget.</p> |
| 3.15 | <p>Members should also note that Boston will lead a focussed business and government mission from Worcester (just outside Boston) in December 2017 to coincide with the inaugural Basketball Hall of Fame tournament in Belfast. Details will be presented to Members in due course.</p> |
| 3.16 | <p><u>New York New Belfast, 8-9 June 2017</u></p> <p>Belfast City Council has been asked to contribute financial support of £5,000 to the annual New York New Belfast Conference. As in previous years, this will offer Council an opportunity to send an Elected Member to speak at the Conference and promote the city to a high level audience of US government, education, tourism and business delegates. It will also be an opportunity to begin to use the emerging new City Place Positioning Branding and narrative, and to add a civic leadership element to the outward going Belfast delegation.</p> |
| 3.17 | <p>Members are asked to approve the request for £5,000 sponsorship and to approve the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or their nominees, and an Officer. The cost for the event and trip will not exceed £3,000 and can be identified within the International Relations Unit Budget.</p> |
| 3.18 | <p><u>Belfast International Homecoming, 4-6 October 2017</u></p> <p>Members are asked to consider a financial request of £5,000 to support the annual International Homecoming Conference in Belfast. Belfast City Council will have the opportunity to promote the city to 100 international visitors from government, business and academics. Belfast City Council will also have the opportunity for Members and Officers to attend the Conference and lead plenary workshops and panel discussions on areas pertinent to the Belfast Agenda.</p> |
| 3.19 | <p>Members should note that Nashville has committed to return to Belfast annually for the Homecoming as they found it a valuable event in 2016. Boston is also considering sending a delegation to the event. Members are also being asked to approve £5,000</p> |

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| | towards the Homecoming 2017 event. This amount can be identified within the International Relations Unit budget. |
| 3.20 | Members should note that, if approved, this action plan – along with already approved activities – will mean that the International Relations budget is almost fully committed. |
| | <u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> |
| 3.21 | International Relations activity cost has been taken account of within the new financial estimates 2017/18. Members have been asked to approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – St Patrick’s Day White House Celebrations - £3,000 – China outward mission - £20,000 – Nashville outward mission - £10,000 – New York New Belfast sponsorship and attendance - £8,000 – Belfast International Homecoming - £5,000 |
| | <u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u> |
| 3.22 | The new International Relations Framework 2016-2021 has been equality screened and signed off. |
| 4.0 | Appendices |
| | Appendix 1 - 2016/17 International Relations Activity and 2017/18 Action Plan |