



Subject:	International Relations Update
Date:	10 May 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
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
1.0	The purpose of the report is to update Members on international relations work undertaken in the period since the March 2017 update to Committee and to outline planning work under way on a number of outbound and inbound visits from Sister Cities partners in the coming weeks.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: - Note the update on the international relations activity since March 2017, including the planned inward and outbound visits to take place in the coming weeks.

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that the International Relations Framework 2016-2021 was approved by the Committee in November 2016. The aim of this Framework is to continue to promote Belfast on the international stage as a place to visit, study, work and do business. The Framework will deliver primarily on the formal relationships already in place through the Sister City Agreements with Shenyang, Boston and Nashville, the Memorandum of Understanding with Dublin and the developing relationships with London. New areas of opportunities will be considered on their merits and relevance to Belfast.</p>
3.2	<p>In addition to the city-to-city linkages, the Council and its partners have, for a number of years, taken part in key international events to showcase the city, develop business opportunities and support our local companies to expand into international markets. These events include MIPIM which takes place in Cannes each March and which was the subject of a report to this Committee last month, and South by Southwest (SXSW) which takes place in Austin, Texas each year.</p>
3.3	<p>A report to the March 2017 City Growth and Regeneration Committee set out a range of outputs achieved in the year to date on the international relations activity. Since that date, a number of additional international engagement events have taken place while work is ongoing on a programme of outbound and inbound visits from Sister Cities and other key partners. An overview of the key work in the period since March 2017 is set out below:</p>
3.4	<p><u>SXSW 2017</u></p> <p>Belfast City Council, along with partners from Invest NI, Digital Catapult NI, Generator NI and the Department of International Trade (DIT), participated in SXSW 2017 – the annual music and digital business event that takes place in Austin, Texas. In total six bands and twenty-six businesses were collectively supported to attend. Four of these companies were supported by the Council and were attending the event for the first time.</p>
3.5	<p>A joint programme of engagement took place over the week from 11-18 March 2017. Belfast City Council support focused on a number of priority activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Output Belfast”, a specific networking event to promote the film, digital and music sectors within the City and provide participants an opportunity to invite and do business with key international buyers. This event was by invitation only and attendees included buyers from Sony, Warner Brothers, Spotify, Blizzard entertainment, ThinkSync Music, Kobalt and Believe Digital. Other guests included

key contacts from the City of Austin, Austin Chamber of Commerce, Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation, The White House, Swissnex Boston, Mayor of London, Spotify and CTM Nashville. The event attracted more than 750 people throughout the day

- Engagement in and attendance at the DIT exhibition stand in the main convention centre. The stand was used as a focal point for the Belfast presence and offered opportunities for meet and greets. Over 3,000 people visited the stand over the four days including Greg Hands, Minister of State in the Department for International Trade. Two Virtual Reality demos from Belfast companies took place and a wide range of meetings took place including DELL, City of Miami Film and TV Commission, Core Innovation Capital, Isovera and The Texas Music Office
- Support to help four new music and tech businesses to take part in the event for the first time.

3.6

A review meeting between all partners is scheduled to take place in the coming weeks. This will focus on the relative merits of attending the event as well as exploring opportunities to reprioritise areas of investment. It will provide an opportunity to take a long-term planning approach to the event in order to maximise the return on investment and also to consider mechanisms for exposing new businesses to this opportunity and supporting their engagement. In the context of the emerging Place Positioning Strategy, it will enable the team to look at how this event can be used to profile Belfast as a dynamic business location that is attractive to and supportive of new, creative businesses. As part of this process there will be a formal evaluation of outcomes for participants. An interim review has recorded the following outcomes for the four Council-supported businesses:

- Potential sales of £185,000 identified
- 1 company to follow up with UK head of music for Sony Playstation, Mattel group and Spotify;
- 1 company to meet with Amazon Prime to identify new workflow patterns to help secure ongoing work for a second season of a hit Amazon Prime TV show;
- 1 company to hold follow-up meetings with Facebook and You Tube regarding developing 360 VR technology for use in live events and visual performances;
- 1 company has a planned collaboration with Kieron Pepper (The Prodigy) now ACM on a programme to help students develop stronger visual brands;
- 1 company established a relationship with High Snobiety magazine for provision of video content (2million Facebook followers).

3.7	Comments taken from participating bands and Belfast City Council-supported businesses are attached in Appendix 1.
3.8	Officers are currently working on follow-up opportunities which were identified as part of the SXSW visit. There is a strong commitment from Austin City Council's Creative Industries Development Manager to work collaboratively with Belfast City Council in an informal capacity to achieve mutually-beneficial opportunities for our businesses. This includes showcasing joint creative and digital business collaborations at SXSW in 2018 and organising and facilitating meetings between Belfast and Austin-based creative companies prior to attendance in 2018.
3.9	Austin City Council also has a contractual relationship with Capitol Factory, a co-working space in Austin. They have agreed to explore opportunities for utilising this co-working space on favourable terms for Belfast businesses making return journeys to Austin. We are currently looking at how the Innovation Factory on Springfield Road could be used to reciprocate this offer for Austin-based businesses seeking to develop a European presence or doing business in the city.
3.10	In addition, US Accelerator company, 500 Start-ups, is looking at Belfast as a potential base for one of its global accelerators. Officers are sharing information with 500 Start-ups to support them in the development of a Belfast-specific proposal. In addition, Warner Brothers and Spotify are keen to develop further relationships with Belfast City Council in terms of the Output Belfast conference and the identification of new talent that may be of interest to them.
3.11	Help Musicians UK are also keen to work in partnership with Belfast City Council in terms of providing added value to events and initiatives both in Belfast and internationally. Opportunities exist to look at how this could work for events such as Audio Visual Arts Festival (AVA), SXSW and the Output Belfast Conference.
3.12	<p><u>Other Sister City and international engagement activity</u></p> <p>In addition to the SXSW engagement and attendance at MIPIM (feedback reported to the Committee in April 2017), the following activity has been undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparatory work for the visit to Shenyang and Beijing in early May. This visit will focus on developing new education linkages and Council representatives will be accompanied by colleagues from our key educational establishments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning work for the May 2017 visit to Nashville. This visit will focus on developing the business opportunities between both cities, as a follow-up to the recent visit to Belfast by the Nashville Healthcare Council - Engagement with Dublin City Council to explore additional opportunities for business engagement and investment, particularly in the post-Brexit scenario - Planning work for incoming delegation from Irish Business Association of New York. Working with the US Consulate and Invest NI, we will put together a one-day programme for the early June visit, focusing on new investment opportunities in the City - Planning work for an incoming visit from Boston in early June 2017. This visit will comprise a mixed delegation with interests across a range of fields, particularly education and business - Hosting three inward visits from US-based universities who are exploring opportunities to expand their overseas study programmes - Co-hosting the first visit to Belfast by the Wenzhou Chamber of Commerce (China), focusing on investment and property development opportunities - Hosting a delegation from Stockholm City Council who were visiting Belfast to explore opportunities around port development and sustainable technologies investment.
3.13	<p>A follow-up progress report will be brought back to the Committee in October 2017. It will set out the key deliverables from the various inward and outward visits that are to take place in the coming months and will also outline the programme of activity for the second half of the year.</p>
3.14	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>No specific financial and resource implications. The budgets for each of these activities have been approved by the Committee as part of the departmental estimates.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>The International Relations Framework has been equality screened.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Feedback from musicians and Belfast City Council-supported organisations attending SXSW 2017</p>

