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| Subject: | Notice of Motion - Tourism Offer in Belfast |
| Date: | 24 November 2017 |
| Reporting Officer | John Walsh, City Solicitor |
| Contact Officers: | Stephen Hewitt, Building Control Manager Mark Mulholland, Policy Research & Legal Officer |

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| 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"/> |

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

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| 1.0 | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT |
| 1.1 | The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Committee on a Notice of Motion (provided at Appendix 1) moved by Councillor McVeigh, regarding the importance of tourism to the City's economy and the need to modernise the current licensing regimes. |
| 2.0 | RECOMMENDATIONS |
| 2.1 | <p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the contents of the draft consultation document provided at Appendix 2 which outlines the purpose of the engagement exercise and a proposed questionnaire. Provide approval for officers to carry out an engagement exercise with representatives from the local tourism and hospitality sector, licensing industry, statutory bodies and the general public over the twelve-week period on the basis set out in Appendix 2. |

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| 2.2 | Feedback from this engagement exercise will be used to inform and finalise a corporate position on the potential development of an entertainment complex (including a casino) in Belfast and extended opening hours for pubs and clubs in the city. |
| 3.0 | BACKGROUND |
| 3.1 | <p>Councillor McVeigh moved this Motion at Council on 1 November 2016. After discussion at the City Growth and Regeneration committee on 9 November 2016 it was agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting to include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposal of undertaking a public consultation to ascertain whether the citizens of Belfast wish to see the modernisation of licensing laws and opening hours in Northern Ireland, and the development of an Entertainment and Casino Complex within Belfast, with associated costings; • the suggested parameters and mechanisms which would be used for such a public consultation; and • related issues which have already been subject to public consultation by other government departments, including timescales and any conclusions arising from them. |
| 3.2 | In the Motion Councillor McVeigh suggests a modernised licensing system and the development of an Entertainment and Casino Complex would provide stimulus and support to the tourism sector and City's economy, with a potential investment of £150 million and the creation of 900 new jobs. |
| 3.3 | This work is being taken forward in partnership between the Development Department, Planning and Place and Legal Services with informative reports to be taken to the City Growth and Regeneration and Licensing committees, once the engagement exercise has taken place. |
| 3.4 | The outcome of the public consultation will be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration to determine a corporate position in relation to the development of an entertainment and casino complex and extended licensing hours in Belfast. Any outcome may then be provided to the Department for Communities (DfC) for consideration. |
| | KEY ISSUES |
| | Modernising Licensing Legislation |
| 3.5 | The current legislation relating to gambling, entertainment and liquor licensing is the responsibility of the DfC. |
| 3.6 | In recent years, the DfC has conducted several reviews in relation to the need for modernisation of the law in areas such as gambling, liquor licensing and entertainments licensing. However, these reviews have not yet resulted in new primary legislation in any of these areas. The current licensing system in Northern Ireland is governed by: |

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| <p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gambling – The Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (NB Current gambling legislation does not allow for Casinos) • Entertainments Licensing – The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 • Liquor Licensing – The Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 <p>In relation to these reviews the Council has generally responded on the basis that the current licensing systems need modernised.</p> <p>Consultation on the Future Regulation of Gambling in Northern Ireland was carried out in 2011. This consultation was wide ranging in its scope and lacked detailed proposals which the Council could comment upon. Our response made it clear that the Council was mindful of its responsibilities in contributing to a vibrant City and that the gambling industry has a role to play within the leisure Industry in Northern Ireland but that this was balanced with a need to ensure that proper safeguards are in place to keep crime out of gambling and to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. The most recent consultation on liquor licensing was contained in the Licensing Bill 2016 and the Council response was broadly supportive of proposals for additional opening hours and noted the importance of restaurants, pubs and clubs to the vibrancy and tourism offer and night-time economy of Belfast.</p> <p>A comprehensive review of Entertainments Licensing legislation was undertaken in 2015 and we await publication of detailed proposals from DfC which will be the subject of a public consultation in due course.</p> |
| | <p>Consultation Next Steps</p> |
| <p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p> | <p><u>Citizen Engagement</u></p> <p>A key facet of this Motion includes the direct engagement with the citizens of Belfast to determine if there is support for modernising licensing laws and for the development of an Entertainment and Casino complex in Belfast.</p> <p>The results of the engagement exercise will provide useful feedback for the Council and the exercise can also be used to ascertain if our citizens wish the Council to lobby for devolved decision-making powers in relation to opening hours for restaurants, pubs and clubs within Belfast.</p> |
| | <p>Engagement Exercise</p> |
| <p>3.12</p> | <p>Subject to approval by Members, officers intend to launch a twelve-week public engagement exercise, with particular focus on representatives from within the city’s tourism and hospitality sector and licensing community. This engagement exercise will be conducted on our Citizen Space engagement platform.</p> |

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| 3.13 | Council officers will also engage directly with a range of organisations including BCCM, FRLT, Visit Belfast, Belfast Chamber, Translink, PSNI and Tourism NI. A draft list of consultees is contained at Appendix 2. |
| 3.14 | All responses will be collated and analysed by officers with a subsequent report brought back to the B&TP and other relevant committees for consideration. Based on the summary analysis members can then determine how best the Council presents its findings to the DfC and the Assembly. The draft consultation document provided at Appendix 2 outlines the purpose of the engagement exercise and a proposed questionnaire. |
| | Financial & Resource Implications |
| 3.15 | There are no Financial and Human Resource implications attached to this report. |
| | Equality or Good Relations Implications |
| 3.16 | As with any other policy development, any such proposals which results in the modernisation of the current licensing system will require formal Equality Screening. However, this will be conducted by the DfC as the department responsible for developing new policy and legislation in this area. |
| 4.0 | Appendices |
| | Appendix 1 – Notice of Motion moved by Councillor McVeigh at Council on 1st November 2016 Appendix 2 – Draft consultation document, proposed questionnaire and list of contacts. |